NATION BUILDING IN INDIA

NATION BUILDING IN INDIA

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY HYDERABAD A.P.

EDITED BY
BRAHMANAND

© NAVACHETNA PRAKASHAN
VARANASI

PUBLISHED BY
BRAHMANAND
NAVACHETNA PRAKASHAN
VARANASI
COVER DESIGN
ASSOCIATED ARTISTS, NEW DELHI
PRINTED AT
INDRAPRASTHA PRESS (CBT)
NEW DELHI

FOREWORD

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. *THE COMMUNAL AWARD* 94
2. *INDIA DIVIDED* 100
3. *HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY* 109
4. *CONGRESS-LEAGUE SETTLEMENT* 111
5. *TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM* 117
6. *FREEDOM—THE ONLY SOLUTION* 124
7. *INDIA'S PARTITION : A COMPROMISE DEAL* 125
8. *A GRAVE DISEASE* 129

CHAPTER II

AREAS OF TENSIONS

1. *BIHAR TRAGEDY* 139
2. *NOAKHALI AND ITS AFTER EFFECTS* 142
3. *POLICE FIRING IN BIHAR* 144
4. *RIOTS IN PUNJAB* 146
5. *FOREIGN POWER BEHIND COMMUNAL RIOTS* 149
6. *PROTECTION OF MINORITIES: AN ESSENTIAL REQUISITE* 151
7. *NEED FOR A NATIONAL POLICY* 154
8. *DELHI AGREEMENT AND AFTER* 155
9. *COW-SLAUGHTER* 166
10. *JABALPUR INCIDENTS* 170
11. *TWO-NATION THEORY* 171
12. *GREAT ERROR* 173
13. *NAGPUR RIOTS* 176
14. *CRIME IN GUJARAT* 179
15. *INDIA-HATERS BEHIND COMMUNAL RIOTS* 185
16. *QUESTION OF MINORITIES* 192
17. *THE TASK AHEAD* 195
18. *RANCHI RIOTS : SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS* 200

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE & STATES REORGANISATION

1. *LINGUISTIC STATES* 211

2. *STATES REORGANISATION I* 212
3. *STATES REORGANISATION II* 220
4. *THE SIKH PROBLEM* 222
5. *BILINGUAL STATES* 224
6. *PUNJABI SUBA* 227
7. *NATIONAL LANGUAGE* 230
8. *DISSERVICE TO HINDI* 233
9. *LANGUAGE BILL* 235

CHAPTER IV

KASHMIR

1. *THEFT OF SACRED RELIC* 239
2. *OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY IN KASHMIR* 242
3. *THE NEED TO RETHINK* 246
4. *AN AMBIVALENT POLICY* 256
5. *A FRESH APPROACH* 260
4. *KUTCH AGREEMENT* 265
7. *MASSIVE INFILTRATIONS IN KASHMIR* 270
8. *PAKISTANI AGRESSION IN KASHMIR* 272
9. *BRITISH SOCIALISTS AND KASHMIR* 275
10. *KASHMIR AND ITS DE-ACCESSION* 280
11. *THE FUTURE OF INDO-PAK RELATIONS* 284
12. *RELEASE OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH* 290
13. *KASHMIR AND INDIA* 299

CHAPTER V

NAGALAND

1. *CHRIST AND MAHATMA* 313
2. *THE NAGA PROBLEM* 316
3. *RENUNCIATION OF ARMS : A PREREQUISITE* 323
4. *NEED FOR FRESH THINKING* 326
5. *PEACE MISSION PROPOSAL* 329
6. *STALEMATE IN PEACE TALKS* 343
7. *NAGAS IN MANIPUR* 349
8. *PLAN FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT* 353
9. *NATION STATE AND SELF-DETERMINATION* 356
10. *PEACE-MAKING IN NAGALAND* 361

CHAPTER VI

CONCEPT OF NATIONHOOD

1. *JOINT NATIONHOOD* 377
2. *THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION* 379
3. *ORIGIN OF A NATION* 395
4. *NATIONAL INTEGRATION : ITS ESSENTIAL REQUISITE* 406
5. *AGGRESSIVE NATIONALISM: A DANGER TO THE WORLD* 412
6. *NATIONHOOD : ITS CONCEPT* 417
7. *NATIONAL UNITY : SECULARISM* 423
8. *CASE FOR SMALLER STATES* 428

Foreword

The book entitled "Nation Building in India" is a collection of articles, specches and press statements by Jayaprakash Narayan. Their main focus is on the problem of nation-building in India. The compilation is the third in the series of the programme undertaken by the Navachetna Prakashan. The Prakashan has decided to publish the writings of Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan in different volumes. Two volumes of JP's articles have already appeared—one entitled "Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy" and the other "Communitarian Society and Panchayati Raj." A book entitled "Socialism, Marxism and Democracy" by Acharya Narendra Deva is also, under print.

We have tried our best to bring together all the scattered material containing JP's thought on nation-building and weave them in a coherent and scientific study on this most important and burning problem. The problem is important; for the country has still to go a long way to become a nation. There are many hurdles.

Being an eminent thinker and one of the architects of India's freedom, JP's views on this problem are of particular significance. He is one of those foremost Indian leaders who were deeply involved in the nation-building process.

India was never a nation; nor is it a nation today. The most important ingredient in the process of nation-building is the element of "national consciousness", and this is woefully lacking even today. Two historical revolutions—the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution—and the subsequent emergence of new values have totally changed the old concept of power and sovereignty. India is at the threshold of yet another revolution. The people have been brought directly into the vortex of politics. The concept of

elitist politics has become outdated and thanks to Gandhi, it has now been replaced by the politics of the masses.

If national consciousness is the test of a nation, India has yet to pass through many ordeals. Territorial integration is not enough to make a nation. What is more important is the achievement of emotional integration. A nation-state is no solution to this problem. JP had fought against the two-nation theory and opposed partition of India. Every nation today is a multi-nation and a multi-national state. The challenge thrown by the contemporary world has to be solved within the framework of a composite or joint nationhood. JP has, therefore, lent a new dimension to the concept of nationhood in this book.

JP upholds the concept of composite or joint nationhood. He however lays down two basic conditions; one, a nation should have a secular base; and two, the polity of a nation should be restructured commensurate with the needs and aspirations of the people so that it may enable every individual to feel the sensation of the decision-making process and development.

In the papers brought together under the present volume, JP has dealt with the problems relating to the nation-building process, such as, areas of tension, factors contributing to it, and methods of conflict resolution. The book has been divided into different chapters accordingly. (1) Historical Background; (2) Areas of Tension; (3) Language and States Reorganisation; (4) Kashmir; (5) Nagaland; (6) Concept of Nation. The material has been arranged chronologically.

There has been delay in publication of this book for which I am entirely responsible. Prabhavatiji is no longer with us and we have been deprived of her blessings. How much we crave for her valuable advice and comments!

I am indebted to Shri Chandra Shekhar, M.P. but for whose encouragement and active support, it would not have been possible to publish this book. Shri Chandra Shekhar was kind enough to secure grants

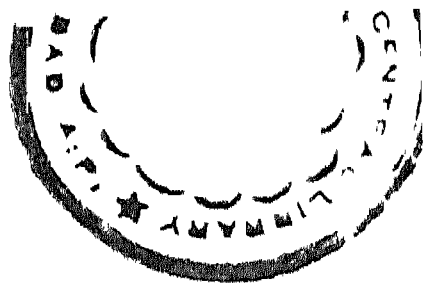
for collection and publication of two eminent thinkers namely, Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan. I am also grateful to Prof Raja Ram Shastri M.P. and Shri Dayanand Sahay, who are Chairman and Treasurer of the Prakashan. We have received grants from various state governments, namely, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. We are indeed thankful to them for their help.

Thanks are due to Shailaja Acharya who assisted me in collection of the material and to Y.K. Sharma, K.B. Lal and Rajit Ram Singh who typed it.

BRAHMANAND

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

1



Mrs Robert Helen was going through John Gunther's *Inside Asia* and was struck by a name mentioned in it. The name seemed familiar to her. She wrote: "And now you turn up in sufficiently recognisable form in Gunther's *Inside Asia* for us to verify through the University of Wisconsin that you are probably you."[1]

Jayaprakash had made a name in the freedom movement of India within nine years of his arrival from the United States. "We have had recurring epicurean recollections of the chicken you prepared, aesthetic memories of your beautiful immaculates as you emerged from the kitchen after cooking," she continued.[2]

And a political career of 50 years has kept him as immaculate as ever. Power could not stain his raiment because he always kept it at a distance. The message of his mentor—the frail old Mahatma who aroused a sleeping Leviathan in India through the spinning wheel—became one of his life passions.

In a discussion with Aruna Asaf Ali and Asoka Mehta in 1947 Gandhi remarked "I have admiration for what Jayaprakash, Aruna, Achyut and others did in 1942. They have thought nothing of playing with their lives. I have paid tribute to their fearlessness and courage. . . ."[3] He invited them to join him in preparing an atmosphere for nonviolence in the country.[4]

Jayaprakash has now made it his mission in life to fulfil Gandhiji's unfinished task.

The tireless, energetic youth in Jayaprakash is growing

1. Letter to JP (unpublished)
2. *Ibid*
3. Pyarelal—*The Mahatma: The Last Phase*, Vol II, p 163
4. *Ibid*. p 163

dim and frail. He recently suffered from heart disease which made it necessary for him to rest but did not dampen his spirit. His eyes retain the same old twinkle and beam with hope as ever. A few months ago he worked a miracle, an event more wondrous than the tales of the Arabian Nights. About 300 dacoits of the Chambal Valley laid down their arms before him and surrendered themselves for arrest and trial before the law.

Jayaprakash combines in himself the essentials of Marxism and Gandhism. Communism without humanism and democracy is parnicious, just as democracy without economic equality is a misnomer. Communism conceived a social order which would free man from alienation but it yielded only to regimentation. It moulded itself into the age-old patterns of power structure and concentrated power in the hands of a few individuals. Gandhi made a plea to decentralise and deconcentrate power and authority in order to give it equitably to every citizen. Hence the quest for freedom led JP from Marxism to Gandhism. This quest is the core of his personality, characterising all three phases of his life: (i) a militant fighter for national independence; (ii) a democrat; and (iii) a nonviolent revolutionary.

2

In 1920, when Gandhi called for non-violent non-cooperation against British rule in India, Jayaprakash was a student in college. He boycotted classes, and when the

satyagraha was withdrawn he continued to stay away from them rather than rejoin an institution of "slaves".

JP's father, Harsu Dayal, revenue assistant in the Canal Department of the Bihar Government, was naturally not happy at his decision. Like all fathers, he had built great hopes on his eldest son as one who would take over the responsibility of the household and add to its status and prestige. His shock was all the greater because young Jayaprakash had shown great promise till then. He had secured a merit scholarship in the college entrance examination. But no amount of persuasion could deplace Jayaprakash from his resolve.

In 1922 he married Prabhavati Devi, the eldest daughter of Braj Kishore Prasad, a prominent Congressman and leading lawyer of his time. Prasad was one of the two chief aides of the Mahatma on his epochmaking satyagraha in Champaran district.

Jayaprakash decided to go to the US to complete his studies. The US had a certain glamour for young Indians, as a citadel of liberty. It had become a second home for Indian revolutionaries, from where they tried to ship arms and ammunition to India for the fight for independence.

JP landed at San Francisco on October 8, 1922. He first went to Berkeley, the seat of the University of California. When the academic semester at the university was over he moved to Marysville in search of a job, for he had to earn to pay his college fees. On his second day in Marysville he met another Indian named Sher Khan in an Indian shop. Sher Khan worked on a ranch and was very helpful to Indian students in finding employment. JP worked on a daily wage as a grape-picker on a fruit farm in Sacramento Valley. He later worked in a fruit cannery in San Jose and then in the stockyards and factories of Chicago. But Berkeley retained its imprint on JP. He even now feels nostalgic about it though he lived in a number of cities among them Iowa, Wisconsin, Chicago and Columbus (Ohio) to pursue his studies.

Jayaprakash had studied natural science in India. He sought admission to the same course in the US. But this

branch of knowledge provides no clue to the technique of revolution. His country was standing on the threshold of a national revolution. He therefore studied Marxism. In Wisconsin—the home of Robert La Follette and progressivism—he became a member of a cosmopolitan club which included radicals of various kinds, including "free lovers". He felt that the Marxian technique of revolution offered a better and quicker way of freedom than the Gandhian way of civil disobediance and non-violent noncooperation. But at Wisconsin University he switched from science to sociology. He was drawn to this subject mainly because it provided scientific knowledge of society and social change. He was convinced that Marx was "one of the greatest minds produced by the human race" and "a pathfinder in sociology."

Jayaprakash took his master's degree in sociology from Ohio University. His dissertation on social variation was considered the best thesis of the year. He returned to India towards the end of 1929 and attended the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress which declared "complete independence" the final objective of the Congress. Here he met Jawaharlal Nehru, then Congress President. Impressed by him, Nehru invited him to head the Labour Research Bureau of the Congress. It was time for JP to fulfil his duty to his family by earning for its support, but he was committed to fighting for the independence of the country. He went to Allahabad, where the Congress had its headquarters, and took up his new assignment with the All India Congress Committee in January 1930.

3

The year 1930 began with a storm. The first salvo had been fired with the declaration of complete independence. The Gandhi-Irwin agreement had collapsed. Gandhi launched the Dandi salt satyagraha in March and was arrested. So was Nehru. These arrests caused detonations throughout the country. The textile workers of Bombay picketed shops selling foreign cloth. People courted arrest in larger numbers. The number of political prisoners swelled to 90,000.

When almost all the important leaders of the Congress were arrested it fell to 30-year-old Jayaprakash to guide the Congress movement as its acting general secretary. He was however arrested in Madras in January 1932, where he had gone with a delegation from the British Labour Party which was visiting India to study the atrocities and repressive measures of the British Government. He was lodged in the central jail at Nasik to undergo one year's rigorous imprisonment. It was here that he came in contact with Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, Minoo Masani and other young Congress leaders.

The failure of the first two civil disobedience movements—one in the 1920s and the other in the 1930s—brought out two basic facts. First, the Congress Party lacked a positive programme for conducting the national struggle. Secondly, the Congress leaders drawn from the upper-middle class intelligentsia, the new bourgeoisie and the feudal land lords, was reluctant to wage a militant struggle for complete independence. There was a good deal of ambivalence in their attitude, and winning legislative concessions and reforms from the British were uppermost in their minds.

Narendra Dev, one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party, had written to Nehru as early as February 9, 1929: "We lack in our midst a body of earnest men of deep convictions who have a living faith in some economic programme.....up to now we have done almost nothing to justify our existence. We cannot hope to prosper if we do not mend matters."[1] Nehru too had felt the absence of such a programme. In 1930 the Congress had decided to start a civil disobedience movement and vested its leadership in the Mahatma. Nehru, like many other Congress activists, expected a positive move from their leader, but Gandhi bided his time. He announced an 11-point programme which he described as the "substance of Purna Swaraj."[2] Nehru wrote a few years later: "What was the point in making a list of some political and social reforms—good in themselves, no doubt—when we are talking in terms of independence? Did Gandhiji mean the same thing when he used the term as we did, or did we speak a different language?"[3] He wrote to Gandhi from Naini prison: "The Congress from top to bottom is a caucus and opportunism triumphs." The Working Committee "had deliberately encouraged vagueness in the definition of our ideals and objectives and this was bound to lead not only to confusion, but to demoralisation during periods of reaction....it is the leaders and their policy that shape the activities of their followers....I feel that the time is overdue for the Congress to think clearly on social and economic issues."[4] He further realised that the constructive programme had not filled the political vacuum.

Jayaprakash stepped up the battle for incorporating economic programme in the objectives of the Congress and spearheaded the demand for a change in its class character. He examined these two basic questions in

1. Unpublished Nehru letters
2. Michael Brecher—*Nehru: A Political Biography*, London 1957, pp 148
3. Jawaharlal Nehru—*Towards Freedom*. p 157
4. Michael Brecher—*Nehru: A Political Biography* London, 1957, pp 205

an article entitled "Fifty Years Ago"[1]. For such programmes were essential prerequisites of a revolution. The Congress was not in reality "a social class proper". It belonged on the contrary to "a group of educated Indians, extracted mostly from the upper agrarian strata."[2] Their demands, he stated "were no more than better jobs, more representation in the socalled legislatures, permanent settlement and civic rights."[3] Freedom could not be their class demand nor would they strive for it. The Congress had remained, as the British so persistently declared, an organisation of "the middle classes without a mass following."[4]

The people had on the other hand suffered from recurring famines. Why should they have any interest in the demands of the middle classes? They wanted direct action, but the forms of struggle which could lead the masses to direct action had not yet appeared on the Indian scene. In any event, they had not acquired sufficient strength.[5]

The industrial class which came into existence in India after the first world war was not yet ready to join the independence movement because "Indian capitalism was not united in its opposition to imperialism. A large section of it served as the middleman of imperialism, and at the same time its growth in the present depended so largely on the help and facilities given by imperialism that it was not in a position to engage in an uncompromising struggle against it."[6] The boycott programmes of the Congress in the 1920's and the 1930's had no doubt met with the approval of the Indian bourgeoisie, but it did not want to go beyond a certain limit.

1. *Congress Socialist*, 1937
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid*
4. *Ibid*
5. *Ibid*
6. *Ibid*

4

Independence : Its meaning

JP set forth what freedom meant to him in an article entitled "First Things First". "Independence," he wrote, "is a concrete thing for all the various sections of the people. The masses, it is true, do not conceive it in terms of assemblies and constitutions. Nevertheless, to them, it does mean certain very concrete things. If to the peasant ground down by landlordism, independence means freedom from that system, it cannot be said that abolition of landlordism is to him an issue remote from independence."[1] Further, "independence can become real for the people only when its definition covers their fundamental needs. Socialism for the masses is identified in a general and broad way with the ending of poverty and exploitation. As far as the masses are concerned, their urge is to fight against the day-to-day oppression from which they suffer. For them that struggle and the struggle for independence are the same thing; one develops into the other."[2]

The elitist Congress did not like to make the organisation broadbased or the programme struggle-oriented, for this would have naturally endangered the leadership of the upper classes. Perhaps they would have been left behind by the advancing masses.

In 1940 Acharya Narendra Dev pointed out that "there is a considerable section in the Congress which represents materially, or in spirit, the interests of the upper class. These Congressmen, due to their social position and education...are nearer the top of the Congress than the bottom and therefore they influence its policies to an extent out of all proportion to their numbers.

1. *Congress Socialist*, December 26, 1936
2. *Ibid*

Therefore, the success of the Congress will also largely be the success of the upper classes. We have to decide who would be successful in the next contest that will ensue; the masses or the classes."[1]

Kisan Sabha

The fierce controversy which raged between the Kisan Sabha and the Congress in 1937 bears out this fact. The Congress leaders found the peasant movement, "as conducted—challenging the supremacy of the Congress, undermining the prestige and the strength of the organised expression of the will to freedom from political subjection..."[2] As a sequel to this Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, president of the Kisan Sabha, resigned from the Working Committee of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee.

Jayaprakash also joined issue with the Congress leaders. "Politics to me," he wrote, "is completely objective and impersonal. Respect and love do not, and will not, even prevent me from pursuing resolutely what appears as truth to me. I differ seriously from Dr Rajendra Prasad on many questions and I deem it my duty to join issue with him if occasion demands. If it suits your purpose to denounce me as anti-Rajendra Babu, you may do so. I know what I am about and abuse and slander will not deflect me from my path. It may sound like self-esteem, but I wish to tell you that I have better things to do than intrigue and manoeuvre for power and position."[3]

Nehru felt the same way about the affiliation of the Kisan Sabha with the Congress. In the early 1930s he advocated the creation of a broad social base for the Congress. "Two things are very dear to me," he told the Allahabad District Board, "independence for this country and equality between man and man....The future of

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—*Towards Struggle*, Bombay, 1946, pp 150-51
2. *The Searchlight*, Patna, December 16, 1937
3. *The Searchlight*, Patna, December 1937

India lies with the peasantry."[1]

Nehru was acclaimed the spiritual godfather of the Congress Socialist leaders, but the Indian Communists held him "unreliable"[2] and "petty bourgeois" at that time. "Why do you bother so much about what Jawaharlal Nehru told you?" wrote M. Ahmed to P.C. Joshi, secretary-general of the Communist Party of India, on March 9, 1929. "What more can one expect from a timid reformist like him?"[3]

Nehru's support to the cause of socialism of course remained lukewarm and indecisive. In 1931 the Congress session at Karachi adopted a resolution—fundamental rights and economic and social changes which later came to be known as the Karachi Resolution. Nehru had originally drafted it, but some Congress leaders thought it was too radical and it was redrafted. A few years later, at the Congress session in Bombay presided over by Dr Rajendra Prasad in October 1934, the Socialists endeavoured hard to introduce a radical economic programme. But their efforts were foiled by the mounting pressure of the rightwing leaders.

The Congress was in fact in the grip of bourgeois-liberal leaders. This was very disturbing to the Socialists in the party. They ultimately formed the Congress Socialist Party. This was set up with a two-fold objective: (1) to counteract the pressure of constitutionalist leaders; and (2) to intensify the struggle for independence. It held its foundation congress in 1934 at Patna. Jayaprakash was its organising secretary, and was elected its first general secretary at the first annual conference in Bombay in October 1934.

The Socialist leaders formed a Socialist Book Club and requested Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru to become its founder-members. Bose agreed but Nehru declined. Jayaprakash was concerned. "Your refusal to join it would be a great blow to us,"

1. *Nehru: A Political Biography*, p 125
2. *Ibid.* p 166
3. *Ibid.* p 166

he wrote to Nehru. "I admit that the club would work on a small scale, but I think it would be unreasonable to expect from the socialist movement in India results that are beyond its resources. And, if you will excuse me for saying so, it would be unfair of you, who are naturally used to doing things on a grand scale, to non-cooperate with the efforts of socialists in India just because they are puny as compared with those of older and wiser organisations. We are, I think, not unjustified in hoping that, if you will not fully identify yourself with us, you will, as a socialist at heart, help us in doing well the little we may undertake to do."[1] Earlier in September 1934, when Jayaprakash had discussed with Nehru the scheme to launch a new party, he had seemed to welcome it though, as Jayaprakash wrote, "he cautioned me against people who talk radical but stay behind when the time arrives for action. Dr Hadilkar, creator of the Hindustan Seva Dal, was also present during the discussion. Kamaladevi and Purushottam Trikumdas had joined in the discussion with Jawaharlal."[2]

In a message to the annual conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1936 Nehru emphasised "the need for building up a powerful anti-imperialist joint front," and said he believed that the Congress was the only organisation which could function as such a front.[3] "As you know," he wrote, "I am vastly interested in the socialist approach to all questions. The other is how to speak of socialism in the language of India. I am referring much more to language of mind and heart, to language which grows from a complex of associations of past history and culture and present environment. So long as we do not speak in some language which has that Indian mentality for background, we lose a good deal of effectiveness. Merely to use words and phrases which may have meaning for us but which are not current coin among the masses of India is often a wasted effort.

1. JP's letter of November 23, 1938 (unpublished)
2. Unpublished material
3. *Advance*, Calcutta, December 25, 1936

It is this problem of the approach to socialism that occupies my mind—how to interpret it in terms of India, how to reach the hearts of the people with its hope-giving and inspiring message. That is a question which I should like a socialist to consider well."[1] Thus, while expressing concern for socialism, Nehru was hesitant to go along with the CSP.

5

Indian Economy

Transformation of India into a colonial market brought about the disintegration of its economy. Communal ownership of village land was replaced by private property through a new land system; handicrafts were hard hit by the imports of British goods, and village-based industries collapsed in the face of fierce competition from British industries. The population dependent on agriculture increased every decade, from 61.1 percent in 1891 to 65.5 in 1901, 72.2 in 1911, 73.3 in 1921 and 75 in 1931.[2] Pressure on land increased as the availability of cultivable land per head decreased from 1.9 acres in 1911 to 1.04 in 1931. Along with this poverty rose steeply.

1. *Nehru: A Political Biography*, p 218
2. A.R. Desai—*Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1948, p 44

In 1932-33, according to income tax returns, out of a total population of 272 million in British India not more than 564.134 persons, about .002 percent, earned Rs 1000 or more a year, 271,171, about .001 percent, between Rs 1000 and Rs 2000 a year, while only 355 families had incomes of Rs 100,000 or more.[1]

The imperial services in India were aptly described as "a Rolls Royce administration in a bullock cart country." By 1940 India was remitting about £ 9 million sterling yearly to meet the pension liabilities of retired European officials. Overseas allowances, passages to England and other special privileges for non-Asian official serving in India cost the Indian taxpayer Rs 215,000 yearly. The total salary bill of superior officers was about Rs 10 million, or 30 percent of the total public expenditure.

6

The caste system in India is a form of class system, occupational distribution roughly follows the pattern of castes. Harijans and other backward castes and tribes constitute the bulk of agricultural labourers and small landholders and they are about one-fifth of the total population.

The large Muslim population belongs mainly to the poorer classes. The Moplah rebellion of 1922 had both communal and economic origins in the economic dis-

1. *Forward*, Calcutta, 28 September, 1940

content of the Muslim farmers of Malabar who were ruthlessly exploited by their Namboodiri Brahmin landlords.[1] Historical analysis pointed to half a dozen reasons for the growing poverty among the Indian Muslims, particularly in Bengal. The Permanent Settlement took away most of the property of the Muslim landed aristocracy. Resumption proceedings further accelerated its decay. A third factor was the undermining of the traditional educational system and the substitution of English for Persian. Most Muslims were simple cultivators, artisans and fishermen who in social standing, appearance, language and customs closely resembled the lower Hindu castes. "Wherever the Muhammadans form the bulk of the population in Bengal...they are the cultivating classes of the people, while the upper and mercantile classes are Hindus."[2]

The Hindu middle classes had for years enjoyed a monopoly of jobs and seats in the state legislature, and the landlords were mainly Hindus. These facts motivated Abdur Rahim and Fazl-ul Haq to start the Praja (Later Krishak-Praja) Party to mobilise the Muslim masses of Bengal. It adopted a programme of agrarian reform and abolition of the zamindari system. When the Communal Award of the British Government was enforced the Muslims aspired to rise from their lowly condition to one of self-respect.[3]

Before independence a large proportion of Brahmins in most provinces were literate. So also were the Khatris and the Aroras in Punjab and the North West Frontier Province, and the Kayasths and Agarwals in the United Provinces.[4]

1. *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p 173
2. According to an estimate, in Backergunge district Muslims were 64.8 percent of the population but owned less than 10 percent of the estates and paid less than 9 percent of the total land revenue. In Mymensingh, only 16 percent of the proprietors were Muslims, paying just over 10 percent of the district's land revenue. W.W. Hunter—*The Indian Mussalmans*, London 1876 reprint of 3rd edition, Calcutta, 1945. p 177
3. *Forward*, Calcutta, November 9, 1940
4. "In 1867 Muslims in Bengal held only 11,7 percent of government jobs staffed by Indians; 20 years later they had less than 7 percent. In 1871

Similar conditions prevailed in the industrial sector. The following table shows the communitywise distribution of industries in 1911.[1]

Community	*No. of Companies*	*Percent*	*Total paid-up Capital in Rs.*	*Percentage of total paid-up capital*
British	282	82.7	29,82,01,000	66.9
Parsis	15	4.4	5,32,32,000	12.0
Gujaratis	3	0.9	29,45,000	0.7
Jews	5	1.5	83,50,000	1.9
Muslims	—	—	—	—
Bengalis	9	2.3	78,02,000	1.8
Marwaris	—	—	—	—
Other Indians	19	5.5	5,45,82,000	12.3
Europeans	3	0.9	59,75,000	1.3
Mixed control	3	1.8	1,40,00,000	3.1
	341	100.0	44,50,87,000	100.0

It is evident from this table that no Muslim owned any industry before 1911. World War I gave an impetus to the growth of the Indian bourgeoisie, but then too the Hindu entrepreneurial groups benefited most.

they had about 12 percent of gazetted appointments; a decade later their share had dropped to a little over 8 percent. In 1886-7 there were 53 Muslim officers in the uncovenanted judicial and executive service of Bengal, or one in 12 among Indians. In the law, "the only secular profession open to well-born Muhammandans" Muslims had been in a relatively strong position in the first half of the century. Until 1851 there had been more Muslim pleaders in Calcutta than Hindus and Christians combined. Between 1852 and 1868 however not one of the pleaders admitted to the rolls of the High Court in Calcutta was a Muslim. In 1867 among the attorneys' protectors and solicitors there were 27 Hindus but no Muslim.
"Adam's third report of 1838 "revealed that in the district of Burdwan out of 1358 students in 190 Sanskrit schools there were 1296 Brahmins, 45 Vaidyas, 11 Darynas, and seven Vaishyas. In the district of South Bihar all the teachers in Sanskrit schools were Brahmins. Of 56 Sanskrit teachers employed in the district of Tirhut not one was a non Brahmin. Adam was in fact surprised to find that in the two districts of Bihar both teachers and students without a single exception belong to that caste." B.B. Misra *The Indian Middle Classes*, London 1961 p 148.

1. M.M. Mehta—*Structure of Indian Industries*, Bombay 1955 p 287

India is a stratified and hierarchical society economically and socially. The estrangement and cleavage between the communities was therefore natural. The caste system was basically responsible for this cleavage, but foreign dominance accentuated the process.

Upper-caste Hindus took advantage of the opportunities British rule offered. For this the early social reformers deserve credit. The Indian renaissance started by Raja Rammohan Roy paved the way for the propagation of English education among Indians, but the Muslims remained aloof from the impact of modernisation. The main reason for their negative attitude was their intense hatred of the British in the first few decades of foreign rule. They organised a number of movements and revolts, hoping to reestablish Muslim rule in India. The Wahabi and Fraisi movements organised boycotts of British courts of justice and educational institutions. The revolt of 1857 was largely organised and spearheaded by them.

To attribute Hindu-Muslim tension to religion is to bypass the real issue. The condition of the Muslims, or for that matter of any minority community in India, is in content akin to that of the Blacks in the US.

7

Communal Question

Analysing the communal question, JP wrote in 1944: "It is often said that to the Muslims religion is everything.

I do not believe this. If this were so, the Muslims would be more influenced by the *fatwas* and opinions of their ulema than of their politicians, knights, khan bahadurs and such others. It does appear rather strange to me that the ulema of India, to their great credit, have been consistently nationalist, while the Muslim League has succeeded in carrying the Muslim masses with it. Between Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani and Jinnah, there is no question as to who is the greater religious representative of Islam, yet it is the latter who is the Qaid-e-Azam and not the Maulana."[1]

"I think," he adds, "the real situation is something like this. Politics in India is largely a middle class affair—the middle classes of all communities. For the Muslim middle class, as for all other middle classes, it is not religion that is important but jobs, power and position. Naturally, over this class the ulema have little influence. The Muslim masses on the other hand are truly religious, but the ulema cannot reach them. In the field of politics it is the middle class that has the organs of public opinion in its control. The ulema are poor, the nawabzadas are rich; the ulema are not scholars in English, the knights are; the ulema being anti-British cannot join the Viceroy's Cabinet, the job-hunters can; the ulema do not know political manoeuvring, the lawyer-politicians thrive on it. The result of all this is that while to the Muslim mass religion is everything or nearly everything—not forgetting their bread—it is not the Muslim divines who become their political leaders but the vocal middle class for which religion—except in personal life—is largely a cloak."[2]

The Muslim League was founded in 1905, but communal tension appeared to become more acute after the Congress initiated its first struggle against the government. Soon after the withdrawal of the 1920 mass movement by Gandhi a series of communal clashes took place, beginning with the Moplah riot in 1921 and followed

1. Narayan, Jayaprakash—*In the Lahore Fort*, Patna, 1947, p 136
2. *Ibid.* pp 136-37

by riots in Multan, Meerut, Allahabad, Moradabad, Delhi, Nagpur, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur and Jabalpur. The seed of discord and estrangement already existed in the soil; the British Government provided the requisite climate for its growth in order to counteract the nationalist challenge.

The Indian national movement suffered from certain inhibitions and drawbacks from the start inasmuch as its leaders were drawn mainly from the Hindu intelligentsia.

After World War I (1915-1918) its social basis expanded from the upper to the lower-middle classes because of increasing starvation and unemployment. The philosophers of militant nationalism drew inspiration from the religious mysticism of India's past, but this did not interest the Muslim masses.

But the intellectuals were victims of the deceptive notion that technological and economic development would ultimately lead to the decline of communal conflict and that the emergence of new socio-economic relations and identities would undercut the organisational bases on which racial, ethnic, religious and tribal politics rested.

Social Mobilisation

Karl W. Deutsch formulated the concept of social mobilisation. According to him, this is "the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialisation and behaviour."[1] Against this backdrop of social mobilisation one may find a clue to the problem of communalism in India. "True communalism," say Nelson and Wolpe, "is being waged not by traditional entities but by communities which were formed in the crucible of mobilisation and competition."[2] According to this

1. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol I & IV No 4, December 1970, p 1114
2. *Ibid.* p 1123

view, "it is probably more accurate to suggest that conflict produces 'tribalism' than to argue, as the conventional wisdom would have it, 'tribalism' is the cause of conflict.[1] Jinnah was quite secular in his outlook but he became a protagonist of the Muslim League because his advocacy of tribalism paid him a good dividend.

This is because people's aspirations and expectations change as they are mobilised into the modernising economy and polity. They come to want, and to demand, more—more goods, more recognition, more power. They all want precisely the same things. So men enter into conflict not because they are different but because they are essentially the same. It is by making men "more alike" in the sense of possessing the same wants, that modernisation tends to promote conflict.[2] This again is due to the fact that "scarce resources cannot keep up with their supply."[3] Mobilised populations are thrown into direct, and very personal, competition with one another for positions within governmental agencies and commercial concerns, for the control of local markets, for admission to crowded schools, for recruitment into the army and for control of political parties.[4]

In a culturally plural society like India social mobilisation engenders competition among different communities, and citizens tend to see through a communal prism and to be responsive to communal appeals. Communalism becomes a matter of opportunism.

Communalism has other dimensions too. More important among them are: (1) the differential rate of mobilisation; (2) institutional assimilation; and (3) the nature and pattern of political institutions. The differential rate of mobilisation is very much discernible in Indian society; the reasons are both social and economic. *Cultural* assimilation does not necessarily bring about

1. *Op cit* p 1123
2. *Ibid.* p 1114
3. *Ibid.* p 1115
4. *Ibid.* p 1115

structural assimilation; it is often achieved in the secondary institutions of society while primary relations remain highly segregated by nationality or religion. If mobilised and competitive communal groups are forced to interact in such cases this naturally leads to communal conflicts.

As for political institutions, if they "do not possess institutional integrity and appear to be in the particular communal interests, those communal groups lacking power and position will tend to question the legitimacy of the institutional order."[1]

Consequently, a positive correlation between communalism and modernisation is more noticeable in the existing participant democracy where it stems from the people's desire for participation in power and decision-making. The proliferation of communal parties, based on caste and religion, became a normal feature after freedom. This danger, which was inherent in the system, was to assume greater proportions in the future.

The young socialist leaders were aware of this danger and that is why they persistently fought for clarity on the economic and political objectives of independence. But the Congress leadership was reluctant to do so. Its objectives remained as vague and ambivalent as ever.

This lack of objectives, policy and programme was responsible for many a political disaster in the ensuing years. "The problem," Acharya Narendra Dev wrote in 1940, "is not to eradicate or bring under control this or that evil in society but to determine the very basis and character of society."[2] Politics, he held, "is the expression of economic issue."[3] The *swaraj* that the Congress had set out to fashion was said to be *swaraj* for the masses, but there was little light shed on this enunciation, or on the means of securing it.

Narendra Dev also pointed out that "among the Congressmen while the larger section is an unconscious

1. *Op cit.* p 1120
2. *Towards Struggle,* p 149
3. *Ibid*

prey to capitalist ideals of social organisation, there is not an inconsiderable number of Congressmen who hold those ideals consciously because they are personally interested in the industries, banks, insurance companies, in short, in all manners of capitalist undertakings and in their profits. The main interest of these Congressmen in *swaraj* is that it would free native capital from the bondage of British capital and thus enable it to foliate in all its magnificance. The leading cadres of the Congress are recruited from the educated middle class. Now, the chief characteristic of this class is that its dominating outlook is that of a social climber. The middle class man desires nothing more than to lift himself to the level of the higher classes. Therefore, the pull of these classes towards the profits of capitalism would be a potent driving force towards a terrible social abyss."[1]

The idealist captains of the ship of state, he held, may lay the foundations of Indian society. But what the nature of that society would be depended to a great extent on the nature of the economic policies they pursued. But once the course towards capitalism was fixed, it would not so much be a question of controlling capitalism but of developing and protecting it, that is of being controlled by it. The Congress at the beginning had made this initial mistake; the idealist captains who had inherited the ship of state from their predecessors had been reduced to nothing more than the highest executives of the capitalist class to bend all national energies into the service of that class. Class-conscious Congressmen had hastened the process; Congressmen before independence followed the policy of compromise rather than struggle. The victory of the Congress was the victory of the upper class. The masses only suffered privation and miseries.[2]

The leaders of the vested interests had therefore opposed mass movements of the lower strata of the population or had distorted and canalised that movement

1. *Op cit*, p 148
2. *Ibid*. p 149

to get concessions from British imperialism as well as from sectional rivals.[1] This attitude prevailed among the Congress leaders throughout the independence movement, and it brought in its trail many consequences which proved detrimental to national unity and independence. Communalism had assumed a serious turn. As many as 1127[2] cases of communal riots were reported to have taken place in 1937 alone. This was the highest figure registered in any year till then. Yet, it is significant in India's history of communal conflicts. The year is marked by intense political activity and the British Government's announcement of a new Constitutional act.

8

New Act

In 1935 the British Parliament enacted the Government of India Act, providing "virtually complete responsible government in the provinces of British India and the framework for a wide all-India federation of the provinces and as many as of the 600 princely states as wished to join."[3] The provincial part of the act was to go into effect on April 1, 1937. The moderates in the Congress should not resist this temptation of power. Nehru had

1. A.R. Desai—*Nationalism in India During the War Period*, Bombay, 1960, p 26
2. *Radiance*, January 31, 1971
3. *Nehru: A Political Biography*, p 215

at the beginning severely condemned this constitution as a grave danger to the nationalist movement, but ultimately he yielded to the Congress decision to contest legislature elections under it.[1]

Nehru was elected president of the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1936. He sponsored many racial resolutions in the meeting of the Working Committee on the eve of the session on such issues as collective affiliation of trade unions and peasant leagues with the Congress and the struggle for political reform in the princely states, but all his proposals were voted out in the AICC. The Congress rejected the act in its entirety and renewed the demand for a constituent assembly. Nonetheless, it decided to contest elections and shelved the question of acceptance of office.

Nehru nominated Jayaprakash Narayan, who was only 34 and general secretary of the Congress Socialist Party to his Working Committee. Jayaprakash was also appointed a member of the mass contact committee the AICC set up. The Socialists in the Congress were jubilant over a speech by Nehru, who trenchantly criticised the 1935 act and labelled it "the new charter of slavery to strengthen the bonds of imperialist domination and to intensify the exploitation of our masses."[2]

The Socialists had already decided at the Meerut conference of the party "to wreck the constitution through the refusal to accept ministerial office," and to launch a campaign against forming ministries throughout the country. In this they sought the cooperation of Congressmen and the All India Trade Union Congress.[3] Jayaprakash said in his circular letter No 2 of February 4, 1937: "The policy of nonacceptance of office must be elaborated and its strategy described concretely." "At the same time," he added, "we must be ready to meet an alternative situation that may arise. In the event we are defeated in the AICC and the latter decides in favour

1. *Op. cit.* p 216
2. *Ibid.* p 222
3. All-India Congress Socialist Party Circular No. 1, January 29, 1936

of office, we should have a scheme ready for the Congress to adopt."

In pursuance of this policy, the Executive Committee of the Congress Socialist Party gave a call for a nation-wide hartal on April 1, 1937 against the new constitution and appealed to Congressmen not to accept it. JP himself courted arrest in Patna by leading a demonstration.

Elections to the provincial legislatures were held in 1937. The poll analysis is interesting. Of the 1161 seats it contested the Congress won 711. This was indeed a striking success.[1] The party secured absolute majorities in five provinces, and it was the largest party in three others. The Muslim League on the other hand secured only 4.8 per cent of the total Muslim votes, and this showed that it had little hold on the Muslim masses till then.[2]

This was expected. The Muslim League was formed in 1906 under the patronage of Lord Minto. "One of the reasons for the creation of the Muslim League was the pressure of British imperialism."[3] Many founder-members of the League belonged to big landowning families, and its main objective was "to foster a sense of loyalty to the British Government among the Muslims of India."[4] It was initially "an alliance of Muslim landlords and British civil servants, and in the first decade of its existence it was a loyal upholder of British interests."[5] The Agha Khan was its first accredited leader. In October 1906, 70 leading Muslims led by the Agha Khan waited on the British Viceroy, Lord Minto, in Simla in deputation and placed before him a memorandum signed by "nobles, ministers of various states, great landowners, lawyers, merchants and many others of His Majesty's Mohammedan subjects."[6] They were

1. There were only 657 general seats out of 1585. The balance was fragmented among Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Europeans, Landlords and others
2. *Nehru: A Political Biography,* p 229
3. Tariq Ali—*Pakistan Military Rule or People's Power,* p 26
4. *Ibid.* pp 26-27
5. *Ibid.* p 26
6. *Ibid.* p 26

concerned mainly with their own interests, for they feared the competition of the non-Muslim bourgeoisie. Lord Minto made a positive response to the deputationists because it provided him with a suitable opportunity for using religion to divide the two groups, which if united could offer a serious threat to British imperialism.[1] Lord Minto stressed during the talks that Muslim political activities should aim at combating the increasing economic power of the Hindus.[2]

The Muslim League had no mass base. But the Congress too did not fare well with the Muslims. It set up candidates only in 58 out of 482 Muslim constituencies in 1937. The Muslim votes went to independents and smaller parties like the Krishak Praja Party in Bengal, which was predominantly Muslim. One of this Party's economic demands was the abolition of zamindari. Why the Congress failed to set up candidates for more Muslim seats is a mystery. "My friends," wrote Jayaprakash, "have told me that in the villages Muslim peasants often asked them who the Congress candidate was and for whom they should vote, and they felt disappointed when they were informed that the Congress was not in the contest. I think not fighting the Muslim seats will go down as one of the major mistakes of the Congress in the election campaign."[3]

The Congress victory at the poll was attributed to Nehru's personal efforts to present a new election manifesto which promised to fight for Indian freedom till it was achieved, to build the Congress into a mighty army of the Indian people, and to organise the masses to remove poverty, unemployment and social and cultural degradation.[4] This was in line with earlier Congress pronouncements.

In 1930 the Congress Working Committee had noted that the average income of the Indian people was seven

1. *Op cit.* p 26
2. *Ibid.* p 27
3. *Congress Socialist,* Vol II, No 5, February 6, 1937
4. *Nehru—A Political Biography,* p 228

paise a day.[1] It had proclaimed in 1936 that "the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty and unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry."[2] which was "due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce."[3] The question of a basic change in the social order had never been considered.

As the date for forming ministries in the provinces drew nearer the Congress leaders became impatient to form governments, although only a year ago they had decided not to accept office. Both Nehru and the left-wing leaders of the Congress had urged rejection. But the Conress ultimately decided to form governments. Nehru reconciled himself to this decision on the plea that "acceptance of office does not mean by an iota acceptance of the slave constitution. It means a fight against the coming of federation by all means in our power....We have taken a new step in involving new responsibilities and some risks."[4]

This was a great disappointment to the Socialists and made them apprehensive. They drew up an alternative plan of action. On March 27, 1937, the CSP executive directed members of the party who might be offered ministerial office not to accept.[5] An anticonstitution rally was held in Delhi on March 16. Jayaprakash said on August 11, 1938, that an antifederation block would be formed within the Congress to fight the issue till the last and would be formally constituted if the drift towards compromise in the party became marked. "In the present, we could strive to carry the whole Congress on this issue with us—no compromise with federation—instead of dividing it into federation and antifederation,"[6] he added.

1. *Congress Working Committee Resolution,* January 1930
2. *AICC Resolution,* Lucknow, 1936
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Nehru—A Political Biography,* p 231
5. *Circular Letter No 4,* March 31, 1937
6. *Circular Letter,* August 11, 1938

Since its inception CSP had recognised the futility of parliamentary methods for achieving independence. On September 30, 1934, a resolution had been adopted at a conference of provincial CSPs stating that "the present parliamentary activity of the Congress, in contesting the elections to the Legislative Assembly, is not of such a nature as to intensify or further the struggle for independence against British imperialism. This meeting feels that such activity constitutes, on the contrary, a drift towards sterile constitutionalism, which has already involved compromise with elements who have no faith either in complete abandonment of the struggle for independence and compromise with British imperialism."[1]

The Congress experiment in parliamentarism, though shortlived, proved very costly. Acceptance of office further widened its gulf with the Muslims. The Muslim League revised its elitist constitution in 1937 and opened its doors to the masses. "The influx of the petit-bourgeoisie, while influencing the League towards independence, did so within a framework of a separate Muslim state."[2] In 1938 it established a Muslim National Guard, an organisation later used to foment communal riots.

The issue in dispute between the Muslim League and the Congress was one of sharing of power. The Congress, it is said, had arrived at a tacit understanding with the Muslim League, notably in U.P., to form a coalition government with it, but this promise, it is reported, was not kept when the Congress came to power in 1937.[3]

Jinnah took this as a "declaration of war"[4] and soon embarked on a programme of wooing the Muslim masses. First the League evolved a comprehensive social, economic and educational programme at its annual session in October 1937, and Jinnah undertook a country-wide tour to rally the hitherto ignored Muslim peasants.

1. Mitra: *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol II, July-December 1934
2. *Pakistan, Military Rule or People's Power*, p 29
3. *Nehru: A Political Biography*, p 231
4. *Ibid.* p 231

ıvoked the slogan "Islam in danger,"[1] which drove ıst nail into the coffin of Hindu-Muslim unity. Finally, the League appointed a committee headed by the Raja of Pirpur (a Muslim taluqdar of Oudh) to examine the condition of Muslims under Congress rule. The committee produced a report alleging persecution of Muslims.

The Congress leaders' expedition into constitutionalism sharpened Communalism and accentuated interprovincial rivalries.[2] The apprehensions of Jayaprakash Narayan and other socialist leaders came true. But the Congress leaders refused to see the writing on the wall. Little did they realise that their efforts would endanger national unity.

8

World War II

The second world war broke out in September 1939. The Viceroy declared India a belligerent state. There were three trends of thought among Indian political leaders about the war, namely

i) unconditional support to Britain
ii) conditional support, and
iii) uncompromising opposition to India's involvement in the war.

1. *Op cit.* p 231
2. *Nationalism in India During the War Period,* Bombay 1960, p 26

As the war intensified, the internal conflict inside the Congress became more acute. Subhash Chandra Bose emerged as a national leader opposing the compromising trends of the rightist leadership. He successfully sought reelection as president of the Congress. This clearly showed the superior strength of the anti-imperialist forces in the Congress and provided a mandate for resuming the struggle for independence. The Congress Socialist Party was firm in its uncompromising opposition to India's participation in the war. On December 31, 1939, Jayaprakash issued his famous war circular No 2 outlining the policy of the party. He wrote: "The war is an imperialist war and Indians cannot fight for Britain in order that Britain hold their country more firmly down. Not even a free India would have anything to do with an imperialist war except to use it to destroy British imperialism elsewhere."[1] He wanted the Congress to start an "immediate struggle without the formality of declaration of war aims and without negotiations and without bargaining."[2]

Left Unity

JP also compaigned for left unity, which he had ardently supported from the inception of CSP. The party was cadre-based and its membership restricted. Communists were permitted to join and placed in responsible position in which they could take an active share in making decisions. But soon it was found that they had secret plans to capture and control it. A document was discovered elaborating their technique for this purpose, and after that Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta and Minoo Masani refused to go along with Jayaprakash any further in building a left block in collaboration with the Communists and Bose and in opposition to Gandhi and the rest of the

1. *War Circular No.* 2, All-India Congress Socialist Party, Lucknow, December 31, 1939
2. *Ibid*

He invoked the slogan "Islam in danger,"[1] which drove the last nail into the coffin of Hindu-Muslim unity. Finally, the League appointed a committee headed by the Raja of Pirpur (a Muslim taluqdar of Oudh) to examine the condition of Muslims under Congress rule. The committee produced a report alleging persecution of Muslims.

The Congress leaders' expedition into constitutionalism sharpened Communalism and accentuated interprovincial rivalries.[2] The apprehensions of Jayaprakash Narayan and other socialist leaders came true. But the Congress leaders refused to see the writing on the wall. Little did they realise that their efforts would endanger national unity.

8

World War II

The second world war broke out in September 1939. The Viceroy declared India a belligerent state. There were three trends of thought among Indian political leaders about the war, namely

i) unconditional support to Britain
ii) conditional support, and
iii) uncompromising opposition to India's involvement in the war.

1. *Op cit.* p 231
2. *Nationalism in India During the War Period,* Bombay 1960, p 26

As the war intensified, the internal conflict inside the Congress became more acute. Subhash Chandra Bose emerged as a national leader opposing the compromising trends of the rightist leadership. He successfully sought reelection as president of the Congress. This clearly showed the superior strength of the anti-imperialist forces in the Congress and provided a mandate for resuming the struggle for independence. The Congress Socialist Party was firm in its uncompromising opposition to India's participation in the war. On December 31, 1939, Jayaprakash issued his famous war circular No 2 outlining the policy of the party. He wrote: "The war is an imperialist war and Indians cannot fight for Britain in order that Britain hold their country more firmly down. Not even a free India would have anything to do with an imperialist war except to use it to destroy British imperialism elsewhere."[1] He wanted the Congress to start an "immediate struggle without the formality of declaration of war aims and without negotiations and without bargaining."[2]

Left Unity

JP also compaigned for left unity, which he had ardently supported from the inception of CSP. The party was cadre-based and its membership restricted. Communists were permitted to join and placed in responsible position in which they could take an active share in making decisions. But soon it was found that they had secret plans to capture and control it. A document was discovered elaborating their technique for this purpose, and after that Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta and Minoo Masani refused to go along with Jayaprakash any further in building a left block in collaboration with the Communists and Bose and in opposition to Gandhi and the rest of the

1. *War Circular No.* 2, All-India Congress Socialist Party, Lucknow, December 31, 1939
2. *Ibid*

Indian National Congress.

Explaining his stand on left unity, Jayaprakash commented: "We do not want to attack the communists in retaliation and we do not undermine the Communist Party, but we cannot allow them to break our party like this. We must reorganise ourselves. I earnestly appeal to you (communists) to help us in this task. You worry about socialist unity; well, I have worried long about it and worked for it. We are not opposed to socialist unity if we realise real unity. Let there be two parties with honest differences criticising each other and honestly cooperating with each other in actual work. That might lead to unity some time.....Let us not grow inward and worry so much about little groups. Let us grow outward and reach the masses with confidence in ourselves and in the party."[1]

The Socialist leader undertook a tour of the whole country to organise resistance to the war efforts of the imperialist government. He made his first speech at the steel city of Jamshedpur on February 18, 1940. He was arrested under the Defence of India Rules and was sentenced to nine months rigorous imprisonment. His statement before the Court which tried him proved his intense humanism. He said: "My country is not a party to this war in any manner, for it regards both German Nazism and British imperialism as evils and enemies. It finds that both sides in this war are driven by selfish ends of conquest and domination, exploitation and oppression. Great Britain is fighting not to destroy Nazism, which it has nurtured, but to curb a rival whose might can no longer be allowed to grow unchallenged. It is fighting to maintain its dominant place in the world and to preserve its imperial power and glory. As far as India is concerned, Great Britain is fighting to perpetuate the Indian Empire."[2] "I have no desire," he added further, "to help Germany or to see Germany victorious. I desire the victory neither of imperialism nor of Nazism.

1. *Op cit.*
2. *Commemoration Volume,* 1963, Jayaprakash Narayan, Madras, p 64

Yet, as a Congressman and a Socialist, I have nothing but goodwill for the British and German people. If India's opposition to Britain's imperialist war ensures a Nazi victory, it is for the British people to decide whether imperialist war ensures a Nazi hegemony or victory with real democracy at home and in India. If the people of Great Britain remove their present rulers and renounce imperialism with its capitalist parent rulers, not only India but the freedom-loving people of the whole world would exert themselves to see the defeat of Nazism and the victory of freedom and democracy. In the present circumstances, however, India has no alternative but to fight and end British imperialism. Only in that manner can it contribute to the peace and progress of the world."[1]

Unlike Nehru and other Congress leaders, Jayaprakash unequivocally declared his opposition to India's cooperation with Great Britain in the prosecution of war efforts. He did not make it a point of bargain, as the Congress leaders did. There is on the other hand a striking similarity between Gandhi and Jayaprakash; both opposed the war, though Gandhi's opposition stemmed mainly from his belief in non-violence; for Jayaprakash it was a matter of anti-imperialism.

In September 1939, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha in an emergency session and issued a statement on September 14 on the 'War Crisis and India.' "The Working Committee," the resolution stated, "invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged; in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. . . . The real test of any declaration is its application in the present."[2] This bargaining resolution, drafted by Nehru, was not to the taste of Gandhi, who had told Lord Linlithgow two days after the outbreak of war that his own sympathies were with England and France from the humanitarian stand-

1. *Op cit.* p 65
2. *Congress Bulletin*—No 3, 25 September 1939, pp 8-14

point. "I am sorry to find myself alone," he wrote in *Harijan* after the Working Committee's resolution, "in seeking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally," though he made it clear that "in accordance with the principle of non-violence it could only be moral support."[1]

The Wardha resolution was a deviation from the past. As early as 1927 the Congress had declared that the people of India had no quarrel with their neighbours, and in the event of Britain entering an imperialist war it was the duty of the Indian people "to refuse to take part in such a war or to cooperate with the British in any way whatsoever."[2] The Congress reaffirmed this policy at its annual sessions in 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939. Its reversal evoked a sharp criticism from the Mahatma. He said: "The author of the statement is an artist. Though he cannot be surpassed in his implacable opposition to imperialism in any shape or form, he is a friend of the English people. Indeed, he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up. He is often more at home with them than with his countrymen."[3] Gandhi was unhappy at the Congress offer of active cooperation in the war effort, including the use of violence, of which Nehru was the leading advocate.[4]

For the first time after 1920, Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Maulana Azad and others defied Gandhi on the crucial issue of violence. The Working Committee reaffirmed its acceptance of nonviolence as a policy for the freedom struggle within India but felt compelled to abandon Gandhi's method for national defence.[5] On October 17 the Viceroy announced that the question of transfer of power could be discussed with the representatives of several communities, parties and interests in India only at the end of the war, though he was willing to have a

1. Hodson, H.V., *The Great Divide: Britain—India-Pak*, London, 1969, p 77
2. *Report of the Fortysecond Indian National Congress* at Madras 1927, p 5
3. *Nehru: A Political Biography*, London 1939, p 261
4. *Ibid.* p 261
5. *The Transfer of Power in India*, pp 69-72

consultative group of all major political parties for the time being.[1]

The Congress Working Committee reacted by calling upon the Congress ministries in the provinces to resign, and they came to an ignominious end in October 1939.

The Viceroy now sought to weaken the Congress and strengthen the League. "For all practical purposes Jinnah was given a veto on further constitutional progress. The Viceroy even discouraged the efforts of certain well-wishers to bridge the gulf between the Congress and the government."[2]

The resignation of Congress ministries was hailed by Jinnah as a "day of deliverance" from the "tyranny, oppression and injustice of Congress rule."

An acute conflict raged in the minds of the Congress leaders: they desired to cooperate with the British Government, and also to strengthen their power base by being in the government at the centre. Nehru himself was not sure of his ground; he made contradictory statements on different occasions. He wrote in a letter to Gandhi in February 1940: "An atmosphere of approaching compromise pervades the country when, in effect, there is no ground for it. It is enervating and depressing because it does not come out of strength but, in the case of many individuals, from the excessive desire to avoid conflict at all costs and to get back to the shreds of power (the Congress Provincial Ministries) which we had previously....It seems to me that while we cannot and must not precipitate a conflict and while we need not bang the door to a possible and honourable compromise.... still we must make it crystal clear that there can be or will be no compromise except on conditions stated by us precisely."[3]

But Nehru held that "satyagraha is not immediately indicated even if we were ready for it. I think it would be wrong for us at this particular moment, when Britain

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*
3. *The Transfer of Power*, p 69-72

is in peril, to take advantage of her distress and rush to her throat."[1] Disagreeing with him, Azad wrote, "I fail absolutely to grasp this mode of thinking. We gave Britain fullest opportunity to take us with her, but she stubbornly refused to do so. We are forced to decide not to participate in this imperialist war. If our present stand is such that it "embarrasses" her....we are not responsible for it; it lies with the imprudent vanity of the British government."[2]

The Congress Working Committee reopened the door to negotiations in its emergency session in June 1940 in Delhi by offering cooperation in the war effort if the British government made an unequivocal declaration of Indian independence and formed an all-party national government immediately.[3]

At the AICC session at Poona the following month Rajagopalachari moved a resolution offering "conditional cooperation" to the British and Nehru supported it. Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Kriplani, P.C. Ghosh and Shankararao Deo abstained from voting. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan resigned in protest against the sanction to violence. Acharya Narendra Rao and Yusuf Meherally, who were present at the meeting, opposed the resolution. The Executive Committee of CSP had earlier issued a statement protesting against the decision of the Congress Working Committee. It stated: "For five years now, the Congress has at each successive session declared its uncompromising opposition to war, and its decision to resist actively any attempt to involve India in any imperialist war."[4]

On July 7, 1940, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* "The Congress has to make its choice. The temptation is irresistible. The Congressmen can again become cabinet ministers. They may also be ministers at the centre. They may have an insight into the war machine. They

1. *Nehru: A Political Biography*, p 267
2. Unpublished Nehru letters, May 25, 1940
3. *Op cit*, p 268
4. Statement of the Congress Socialist Party, July 25-27, 1940

will watch from inside (again to the extent allowed) the Englishman at work when engaged in a life and death struggle. They will have to raise crores of rupees and dispose off them in the war effort. If I have my way, I would have the Congress resist the irresistible temptation and not grudge those who believe in the accepted method of filling all these posts."[1]

In July the Muslim League adopted the goal of Pakistan, or the division of India into Hindu and Muslim states. The August offer of the British Government was an anti-climax to the whole drama. The Governor-General issued a statement with the authority of His Majesty's Government which stated among other things that the British could not contemplate transfer of the "responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government where authority was directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission into such a government."[2] It promised dominion status, but that too only after the war ended. It in fact contained the seeds of India's partition, with no assurance of independence, and provided an impetus to the demand of the Muslim League for Pakistan.

The conciliatory diplomacy of the Congress leaders had proved rather abortive. The Ramgarh session approved civil disobedience as "the only way out" and authorised Gandhi to launch a movement again when he thought fit. AICC met on September 16, 1940 and renewed its affirmation of nonviolence as the weapon in the struggle for *swaraj*. It went to the extent of saying that the recent world events have demonstrated that "complete world disarmament is necessary and the establishment of a new and more just political and economic order if the world is not to destroy itself and revert to barbarism....."[3]

1. *Harijan,* July 7, 1940
2. Governor-General's statement on August 8, 1940
3. Nicholas Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power,* 1942-47, p 878, Delhi 1970 Vol I

9

Behind Prison Bars

The young revolutionary Jayaprakash was behind prison bars and was unable to follow these confabulations at close quarters. The way the Congress leaders were negotiating with the British worried him. On July 20, 1940, he wrote from prison to Nehru: "You can imagine how recent events have grieved and hurt us. Rajaji has stabbed us in the back....All of us here accept you and beseech you to lead the opposition in AICC and the country. You should resign your seat on the Committee. After a settlement, if it comes about, you must leave the Congress and form another political organisation to fulfil the remaining part of the political task of the Indian revolution."[1]

Gandhi had already made his position clear. In a statement to the press on October 15, 1940, he said: "Nonviolent Congress cannot wish ill to Britain. Nor can it help her through arms since it seeks to gain her freedom not through arms but through unadulterated nonviolence."[2] He added: "we want to tell the people of India that if they will win *swaraj* through nonviolent means, they may not cooperate militarily with Britain in the prosecution of the war."[3] Gandhi had earlier given his unconditional support to the war effort, but subsequently he changed his position. It must have surprised him that his intimate and trusted colleagues like Rajagopalachari and Patel declared themselves for conditional cooperation. Speaking to the Bombay suburban and Gujarat Congressmen on May 15, 1942, he said: "Mind,

1. JP's unpublished letter, July 7, 1940
2. *Forward*, Calcutta, October 26, 1940
3. *Forward*, Calcutta, October 26, 1940

I am not pro-Japanese. Indeed Japan is too much of an aggressor for me to be that. But I emphatically differ from Rajaji. For with what can we fight Japs! The British are the immediate aggressors."[1]

Towards the end of 1940 Jayaprakash was released from prison. But he was again arrested under Rule 29 of DIR and detained at Arthur Road prison in Bombay. He had been suffering from Sciatica and throat trouble for some years. He was later transferred to Deoli camp.

Deoli Camp

Deoli, an unknown place in the desert of Rajasthan, suddenly developed into a township where the government had built a concentration camp for prisoners of war from the beginning of 1940. It was now converted into a centre for holding Indian political prisoners. It had 104 inmates. They belonged to different political parties: Communist Party 66, Congress Socialist Party 38, Revolutionary Socialist Party (Annushilan) 11, HSRA 5, and 14 unattached. JP met many old friends, including old Communist colleagues like Ajoy Ghosh and S.S. Mirajkar, in the camp.

JP undertook a fast of 35 days in protest against the ill-treatment of political prisoners in Deoli. In its wake the British Government published a summary of documents allegedly written by Jayaprakash.

Gandhi said in a statement on October 21, 1941: "The publication of the statement attributed to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, which he is stated to have attempted to smuggle from his place of detention, does not, so far I can see, lead us anywhere. If the motive was to discredit the organisation of which Shri Jayaprakash Narayan is a distinguished member, it must fail."[2] He continued: "Assuming the correctness of the charge against Jayaprakash Narayan, the method advocated by him is against the policy of truth and nonviolence

1. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-47, Delhi 1971, Vol. II, p 128
2. *The Hindu*, October 23, 1941

adopted by the Congress, and he deserves the severest condemnation. But it illbehoves the government to condemn or discredit it. Frankly, all nationalist forces, no matter by what they are described, are at war with the government. And, according to the accepted canons of war, the method adopted by Jayaprakash Narayan is perfectly legitimate. He has had his training in America for seven years, and is student of the methods adopted by Western nations in their fight for freedom. To practise deception, to resort to such methods and even to plot murder, are all honourable and turn the perpetrators into national heroes. Are not Clive and Warren Hastings British heroes? If Jayaprakash Narayan was in the British diplomatic service and by secret diplomacy achieved something of importance, he would be covered with distinction."[1]

The Communists on the other hand had changed their stand. On July 7, 1942, the Home Department of the Government of India in a telegram to the Secretary of State stated: "The Communist Party of India in their announcements and circulars to the party members have recently indicated a change of front, and recognising this war as a people's war, in which Indian people must in their own interest make common cause with united freedom-loving nations, have decided, if permitted, to throw their energies into task of cooperating with existing war efforts."[2] The government subsequently lifted the ban on CPI and its organs.

CPI argued that after the entry of the Soviet Union into the war on the side of the Allies it had ceased to be an imperialist war. The Party therefore decided to lend its support to the war efforts of the imperialist government. If a choice had to be made between independence and imperialism CPI preferred the second course because Soviet security was more important to it than India's freedom.

From Deoli camp Jayaprakash wrote: "The fellows

1. *Op cit.*
2. *The Transfer of Power*, 1942-47, Vol II, p 345

(Communists) here continue to talk of intensifying the national struggle, though at the same time they maintain that the character of the war now is anti-fascist."[1] He stuck to his earlier views on the war, though he expressed concern over Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was a "giant fortress of world socialism and the proletariat," he said, but the question of national independence was as important as that of its defence. Neither of them was less important, but for the communists India's independence had retreated into the back ground. JP's dilemma was how to pull down the fortress of imperialism and thereby free India from the bondage of slavery and at the same time help the Soviet Union in its distress.

He therefore wrote: "Till the invasion of Russia, we had looked upon the war as an imperialist war.... The recent action of Germany against Russia has in no way modified this position....If Russia and Britain are facing a common enemy it does not mean that their interests coincide with Russia in prosecuting the war to identical ends....In any case, if Russia desires to destroy Nazism, it must in the end depend upon its own resources and strength....The danger which Russia faces, however, is a question which as socialists it is our duty to seriously consider. With all its faults, Soviet Russia is a giant fortress of *world socialism and the proletariat.* We cannot sit quiet when this fortress is under assault. But we shall not bring succour to it if we rushed to the aid of British imperialism. But it would be a mistake to relax our attack on imperialism....Can we do anything to render direct aid to the Soviet, without helping in any manner British war efforts?"[2]

The situation on the eastern front of India started deteriorating by early 1940. Singapore fell on February 15 and Rangoon on March 5; Japan was knocking at India's doors. With these developments the differences among the Congress leaders on their attitude to the war

1. Unpublished Deoli papers, 1940
2. *Ibid*

were becoming sharper; this became more apparent when AICC met at Allahabad in May 1942. Gandhi is said to have drafted the original resolution, which was more revolutionary and struggle-oriented than Nehru's. Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Bhulabhai Desai took the view that the withdrawal of the British at this stage would inevitably mean Japanese occupation of India. Speaking at the meeting, Achyut Patwardhan said: "If we do not take decisions, Jawaharlalji's attitude will lead to abject and unconditional cooperation with the British machinery, which must collapse. If the battle of India is to be fought by Wavell, we shall do ourselves discredit if we attach ourselves to him. We talk of allying ourselves with the allied nations. I doubt if America is a progressive force. The existance of the American army is not a fact which improves our situation. This war is an imperialist war. Our policy can be that we take no side."[1]

Acharya Narendra Dev also expressed his difference with Nehru. "I do not agree with the view," he stated, "that the war is one and indivisible. The aims of Russia and China are not identical with those of Britain and America. If it is one, we should join the war and side with Britain. Our position has not been that we want power because without it we cannot kindle the national spirit; our position has been that if the war was a people's war, and there was proof of it in action, we are willing to throw in our weight on the side of democracies."[2]

Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani and Vallabh Bhai Patel voted for Gandhi's draft.[3] Nehru had also drafted a resolution, but it fell through. The Congress president did not want a split, and by his efforts a compromise was arrived at. AICC however requested Mahatma Gandhi to take up the leadership of the Congress to carry out a programme of nonviolent noncooperation when it became necessary. In a memorandum drafted by Dr Adhikari and

1. *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. II, p 159-62
2. *Ibid*, p 163
3. *Ibid*. p 164

P.C. Joshi the Communist leaders, decided to give their full and wholehearted support to the war.

The British Government had already indicated its mind in its August Declaration in 1940. The Viceroy reaffirmed the same objectives on January 10, 1942. Explaining the threefold objectives of the declaration he assured the Congress that (i) full dominion status in accordance with the Statute of Westminister would be granted only after the war, (2) that the status of practical independence was to be attained as soon as possible under a constitution of Indian devising, and (3) that the major communities of India must agree on the future set up in the country.[1] This last objective proved a thorn in the flesh of the Indian leaders. Secretary of State for India Leopoed Amery repeated on February 4 the pledges of His Majesty's Government to the minorities. Britain, he said, stood by the pledges given to India, "both by our general pledge as to India's future freedom, and also by our pledge to the different main elements in India's national life that they shall not be coerced under a system of government which they are not prepared to accept."[2]

He released a draft declaration on February 27, 1942. "I declare," he stated, "that His Majesty's Government recognises India's rightful position as a dominion equal in every respect to the United Kingdom, in no respect subordinated to it, but associated with it in the free and equal partnership of the British Commonwealth and thereby in the fellowship of independent and freedom loving nations...the constitutional framework under which a free India is to live, should be of Indian devising, and correspond to Indian social, economic and political conceptions and to the peculiar conditions of the complex structure."[3] But he introduces a rider: "His Majesty's Government should not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for peace and welfare to any system of government whose authority is directly denied

1. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-47, Vol I, p 81.82
2. *Ibid.* p 230
3. *Ibid.* p 257

by large and powerful elements in India's life or be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government."[1]

Amery did not stop here. He said in a memorandum that "the Congress Party—which, in spite of efforts to keep a Muslim element in its facade, is essentially a Hindu party—in its ingrained conviction that it is the natural heir to the British Government in India, and entitled to take control both of legislative and executive powers unfettered by any limitations,"[2] is intransigent in its demands. But in view of the experience of the Congress governments in the provinces and of the centralised "dictatorship" of the Congress High Command the Muslims had decided to reject entirely any system of government for India as a whole based on a parliamentary majority executive. The demand for Pakistan embodied this rejection in its extreme form.[3] He was confident that his insistence on the agreement had brought to the forefront the true nature of the Indian problem, namely the existence in India, "over and above all other local differences, of two great communities, at least as separate, and indeed antagonistic in culture and outlook, as any of the contending nations in Europe."[4] "To talk of these two communities as majority and minority," he said, "is a dangerous misuse of terms, because it tends to imply that the right of the numerically smaller community to have its individuality respected is less than that of the larger. It is, after all, in defence of that right that we are at war today."[5]

It is evident from this memorandum that the British Government had already made up its mind regarding the future of India. It found its reverbaration in a public speech by Jinnah: "We are not a minority," he said, "but a nation. If we have adopted an attitude of non-embarrassment towards the British Government, we know

1. *Op cit.* p 258
2. *Ibid.* p 32
3. *Ibid*
4. *Ibid*
5. *Ibid*

that if the British Government is broken we are also in danger. The League is the only authoritative organisation of Muslims. We cannot tolerate Muslims in the camp of enemy. The non-League Muslims are traitors in any camp."[1]

On February 28, 1942, Amery gave a fresh interpretation of the declaration. He conceded that (i) there should be an explicit acknowledgement that the future Indian dominion could secede if it wished, and (ii) that the British Government would set up what it considered the most suitable future constitution making body immediately after the war if the Indians had not previously agreed on it themselves, but also (iii) that any province which did not wish to accede to the new constitution could stand out, and finally, (iv) that the whole field of the obligation on the part of the British Government, as well as of such continued military assistance as India would need, would be dealt with by a separate treaty to be concluded with the constitution-framing body and to come into force simultaneously with the new constitution.[2] This was significant in as much as the British Government virtually conceded to the Muslim League its demand for the right of secession and secondly, the British still wanted to retain their control over the military and the bureaucracy.

Gandhi had rightly pointed out to Stafford Cripps on March 27, 1942 that "the document was an invitation to the Muslims to create a Pakistan,"[3] but it was clear from his (Jinnah's) attitude," wrote Cripps, "that his committee had already accepted the scheme in principle."[4]

The British Government was confident that its intelligent and crafty move would succeed, for the Congress on the one hand was a completely divided house and Jinnah on the other hand got a moral boost from his master.

"It remains to be seen," wrote Amery, "whether in face of the external danger any of the Congress leaders

1. *Op cit*. pp 467-468
2. *Ibid*. pp 268-69
3. *Ibid*. p 499
4. *Ibid*. p 480

can be persuaded to realise that the half loaf, which is all that either we or the rest of India can give them, is better than no bread. Jinnah...will be content to realise that he has now got Pakistan in essence whether as something substantive or as the bargaining point...."[1] Further, "After all, supposing that Pakistan does come off, there will be possibly two Muslim areas, the whole of the states, Hindu British India (if that does not divide itself up!), and finally at least one important primitive hill tribe...."[2]

Jinnah's attitude had remained recalcitrant after his disillusionment with the Congress. "He joined the Muslim League just before the first world war. He joined the Muslim League because the Congress was getting too 'extreme', "it was going beyond the limits prescribed by law and Jinnah's constitutionalism could not tolerate this heresy."[3] In reality Jinnah was afraid of the praticipation of the masses in the political process; he wanted to keep political agitation confined to an elitist level. There were strong indications that with the arrival of Gandhi on the Indian political scene the common people might surge up to participate in the decision making process.

"I have held," Jinnah said in a press statement on June 22, 1942, "that Gandhi never wanted to settle the Hindu-Muslim question except on his own terms of Hindu domination. It is clear to those who understand Gandhi's language that he wants the British Government to accept that the Congress means India and Gandhi means the Congress and to come to terms with him as spokesman of all India with regard to the transfer of government to the self styled Indian National Congress, and to keep him in power by means of British bayonets so that Hindu Congress raj can dominate the Muslims and the other minorities."[4] Jinnah was in a "completely uncompromising frame of mind" and preferred British raj to any other raj excepting Pakistan. The resolution of the Working Com-

1. *Op cit.* p 468
2. *Ibid.* p 469
3. *Military Rule or People's Power,* p 28
4. *The Transfer of Power,* 1942-7, Vol II, p 251

mittee of the Muslim League on August 20, 1942, and Jinnah's press statement in Bombay on September 13 clearly indicated that he was not prepared to accept any settlement short of Pakistan. He told newsmen in Bombay that "if the Muslim League were to decide—mind you, I am not in touch with anybody—but I have little doubt in my mind that a very large body in the army will fall out, and today almost 65 percent of the army are Mussalmans. And not only that, I think you will find the entire frontier ablaze. Reading newspapers that I get from other Muslim countries, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, lately Turkey and Egypt, the entire Middle East right up to Ankara and Cairo are not only in full sympathy with the Muslim demand but they are strenuously supporting it."[1] He invariably repeated that "all parties must agree and guarantee the right of Mussalmans to self determination and they should pledge themselves to give effect to the verdict of a Muslim plebiscite and carry out the partition of India accordingly."[2]

Perhaps the Congress leaders could not read the writing on the wall or were afraid to launch another struggle. Their anxiety to be elevated to power without much sacrifice had made their vision hazy. On April 23, 1942, the Madras Legislature Congress Party, presided over by Rajagopalachari, adopted a resolution recommending to the all India Congress Party that "to sacrifice the chances of formation of a national government for the doubtful advantage of maintaining controversy over the unity of India is most unwise policy, and that it has become a necessary evil to acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation of India...."[3]

At its Allahabad session AICC had however turned down this resolution and passed a counter resolution opposing any proposal to break up India."[4] Rajaji bade goodbye to membership of the Working Committee by

1. *Op cit.* p 960
2. *Ibid.* p 957
3. *The Transfer of Power,* Vol I, p 842
4. *Ibid.* p 25

issuing a press statement on July 10, 1942. "I am convinced," he said, "that if the Congress accepts the principle of territorial self-determination proposed in my AICC resolution we can make Jinnah and the League accept it and join the Congress in a united political front."[1]

Gandhiji was flabbergasted to find Rajaji supporting the vivisection of India. Heartbroken, he said: "Rajaji concedes Pakistan, but has Jinnah even moved an inch to discuss the matter with him? No. For Jinnah's game is to bring pressure on the Congress and Congress pressure on the government. I cannot swallow the splitting of India. I alone know what pain the thought has caused me. Rajaji is an old friend of India. What after all is Pakistan? What does it mean? Jinnah has rarely explained it. The masses are duped....Anarchy is the only way. Someone asked me if there would be anarchy if the British go. Yes, it will be there. But I tell the British, give us chaos."[2]

Cripps' Mission

Cripps arrived in India in early 1942. Simla—the summer capital of India in those days and now the state capital of Himachal Pradesh—warmed up with political parleys. He held discussions with various political leaders. He met Maulana Azad along with his secretary Asaf Ali on March 25, 1942. The Congress president raised the issue of control of the defence forces under an interim government. But Cripps had nothing new to offer. He held it essential for the efficient conduct of the war that strategic and operational control should remain the responsibility of His Majesty's Government acting through the Commander-in-Chief. He only agreed to include an Indian representative in the war cabinet. Beyond this he maintained the same old position.

Gandhi also met Cripps on March 27, 1942. He

1. *The Transfer of Power*, Vol II, p 365
2. *Ibid.* p 130

naturally declined to accept the declaration on account of (1) the provisions regarding the Indian states and (2) the question of accession or nonaccession of the provinces to the proposed Indian union.

On April 2, 1942, the Congress Working Committee submitted its resolution expressing dissent from the Cripps proposals. It suggested that a national government should control defence through a defence minister while the Commander-in-Chief should control the armed forces. The Congress was however prepared to accept certain limitations on the normal powers of the defence minister such as control of the higher strategy of the war by the war cabinet. The Congress hoped this resolution would pave the way for a settlement, but the British Government was as adamant as ever.

Cripps had an interview with Jinnah on March 25, 1942. When he gave Jinnah a copy of the draft, he found Jinnah was somewhat surprised because it met his demand for Pakistan.[1] Cripps wrote in his note that "Mr Jinnah was mainly interested in whether those provinces would have an effective right to opt out of the proposed Indian union if they so wished."[2] He explained to him his proposal that the legislature should vote on a resolution to join the union and that if there was a majority of less than 60 percent the minority should have the right to challenge a plebiscite of the adult male population. Jinnah reacted favourably, though he doubted whether 40 percent was the right figure to apply to the minority.

The Indian Communists's role in the whole game is still inexplicable. They advocated (1) Congress League unity and (2) aid to the war effort. They supported the demand for Pakistan on the ground that every nationality had the right to self-determination. The resolution was passed by the enlarged plenum of the Central Committee of CPI on September 19, 1942, and confirmed by its first Congress in May 1943. The Communists insisted that the "freedom of India depends on the unity

1. *The Transfer of Power*, 1942-47, Vol I, p 480
2. *Ibid*

of Congress and the Muslim League." But this logic sounded queer. The Soviet Government faced with a similar problem in its own territory, never allowed any minority in the country to go beyond the point of secession, particularly in the border areas. The right to self-determination, of which the Soviet Union has been an ardent exponent was denied to its own people. It is interesting therefore to study developments in the Soviet State itself.

Russia's Position

In 1903 the second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party adopted a clause in its programme on "the right to self-determination for all nations forming part of the states."[1] Lenin himself said in a speech in May 1917: "If Finland, if Poland, if the Ukraine break away from Russia, there is nothing new about that. Anyone who says he is a chauvinist."[2] He condemned Rose Luxumberg for opposing the separation of Norway from Sweden. She held the view that this was "merely a manifestation of peasant and petty bourgeois particularism,"[3] while according to Lenin "there is a democratic content in the natoinalism of every oppressed nation, and that in this respect it should be supported in spite of its bourgeois character."[4]

Stalin seemed to be more realistic and pragmatic on this question than Lenin. In his report on the national question in 1917 he admitted that "the oppressed nations forming part of Russia had the right to decide for themselves whether they wished to remain part of the Russian state or to separate and form an independent state."[5] The all-Russian party conference had therefore conceded

1. Alfred Cobban—*The Nation State and National Self-Determination*, p 190
2. *Ibid.* p 191
3. V. I. Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, 1916, p 426
4. *Ibid.* p 424
5. *The Nation-State and National Self-Determination*, p 194

that "the right of all nations forming part of Russia to secede freely and form independent states shall be recognised."[1]

In 1899 the Austrian Social Democratic Party adopted at Brunn a national programme to divide the nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire into separate units, each with its national autonomy, based on cultural connexions, that is on personal nationality and not on territorial contiguity. Stalin criticised this programme as an "absolutely unjustifiable substitution of national autonomy for self-determination of nations.[2] Though he condemned such national autonomy he advocated regional autonomy.

He also realised that "as a practical policy national self-determination, or the right of secession, was incompatible with the military and economic interests of Soviet Russia." Stalin felt that the border areas around Russia were not in a position to defend their independent existence without the military and economic assistance of Central Russia just as Central Russia was not in a position to preserve its military and economic power without the assistance of the border regions. Russia had to go back on her commitment in view of (1) economic development and (2) national security.

Nevertheless the Soviet Union became a great exponent of self-determination of the coloured peoples of Asia. "Self determination," writes Lohia, "to nationalities loses all meaning in Soviet Russia: it had abundant propagandist value in Czarist Russia. Communism is partitionist only when it is not in power in order to weaken its foe in the shape of a strong nationalism. When it can itself represent nationalism, it ceases to be partitionist."[3]

Quit India Movement

When these political activities were going on Jaya-

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*
3. Dr Rammanohar Lohia—*Guilty Men of India's Partition*, pp 3-4

prakash was in jail. He was transferred from Deoli prison to Hazaribagh central jail in the province of Bihar. Now the 70 year old Mahatma—more youthful than a young man—gave the call for 'struggle on August 8, 1942 which has come to be known as the Quit India Movement. The clarion call of the Mahatma sparked off a national war. The country became a vast prison house and news of these events began to echo inside the prisons too. Jayaprakash was restless for he had to fulfil the historical task for which he had been waiting. In November 1943 he escaped from prison with five comrades by scaling down the prison walls. With Gandhi in prison Jayaprakash now became the source of inspiration for millions of freedom fighters in India. He went to Nepal, established a guerilla underground headquarters and travelled all over the country kindling hope and mobilising the people.

Jayaprakash became a legendary hero of the revolution as a guerilla leader. Amery wrote to Linlithgow on May 27, 1942, that Edward Thompson had informed the British Parliament about JP's guerilla activities in the Sunderbans.

Jayaprakash was again arrested on September 18, 1943 at Amritsar railway station and brought to Lahore Fort. Once known as Shahi Quila (imperial fort), well fortified and surrounded with "an evil atmosphere and with people who, to say the least, were dehumanised, having no human standards or values...." It was a veritable hell; the distinguishing line between man and brute was erased here.

"A *Mulzim* (an accused) in the world outside is an ordinary enough creature, but in Lahore Fort he is definitely a subhuman. No human sympathy should be shown to him; the sweeper or the Bhisti should never speak to him; no superior being such as a CID constable should show him any courtesy or talk to him as a brother creature or an equal."[1]

1. *In the Lahore Fort*, p iii

"The *mulzim* should be kept under lock and key all through the day and night; a sentry with rifle and bayonet must stand guard at the door, which was barred, bolted and heavily padlocked anyway. When talked to, the sentry must turn deaf or into a statue of stone, but his ever awakeful eyes must follow faithfully every move that the animal made in the cage."[1]

This was Lahore Fort. The young rebel underwent incarceration there for more than 16 months, from September 1943 to the end of January 1945. It is a long story of interrogation and torture; the imperialist government was out to muzzle his voice for ever. His troubles began a little more than a month after his arrest in the form of interrogation. He was taken daily to an office and made to sit there for varying periods of time. For the first few days the hours were not long, but their length gradually increased, first from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., then up to 10 p.m., to midnight, and finally stretching over the whole day and whole night round the clock without sleep. He was occasionally brought back to his cell, but as soon as he dozed off he was taken back to the office. This process continued for several months.

In spite of this torture JP's spirit remained undaunted. "I was prepared," he wrote, "to answer any questions that did not relate to my recent 'underground' activities, and as for a statement I had no more to say than that I was an enemy of the British Empire in India (not of Britain or the British Commonwealth), that I was working for my country's independence and that I would continue to do so till either the object was achieved or death intervened."[2] The mighty force of the British Empire could not shake his will; his passion for the independence of his country was irrepressible. It was dearer to him than life.

Undaunted and undeterred he announced: "I am conscious of the argument that those who believe in violence as a political method as I do must be prepared

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid.* p 169

to be forcibly suppressed."[1]

The British Government had lost all sense of proprieties in suppressing its political opponents. There existed only an indistinguishable line between the tortures practised by the fascists and those of the British. "A political revolutionary," wrote JP, "may be executed for his offence when found guilty by the established law; but he may not be put to any torture for the extortion of information. War is the deadliest, most brutal and violent form of political conflict. Yet a prisoner of war has certain rights and immunities which civilised society scrupulously respects. The same person who would be most mercilessly bayoneted to death in the field of battle would be immune from ill-treatment in the war prisoners' camp and would receive such amenities as the standards of the countries concerned and his own status warrant."[2]

For Jayaprakash the question of violence versus non-violence was not so important as the independence of the country. He practised what he preached. A slave has no option but to break his chain. He never felt afraid to say what he believed to be true, for moral values were the nerve centre of his life. They provided him with light and solace and guided his action. The Congress leaders on the other hand were wavering between nonviolence and violence. They had lost all scruples. They followed the principle of nonviolence when it suited them. Jayaprakash, without being a Gandhian, was more Gandhian in that he stuck fast to what he considered to be the truth and practised what he professed. Most Congress leaders were Gandhian in profession and un-Gandhian in practice. Power was their ultimate goal; a pattern of double standards their guide.

The Congress leaders had accepted the principle of non-violence for achieving independence and had promised to practise it in future. When the war began they argued that there was a distinction between the

1. *Op cit.* p 171-2
2. *Ibid.* p 172

struggle for independence and national defence: nonviolence would be the method for the former but not for the latter. But when they were rebuffed by the British Government they reverted to the pretence of nonviolence and went to the extent of proclaiming that they would follow a policy of disarmament when India became independent. For Gandhi nonviolence was a creed; for others it was a policy. Jayaprakash took the blame for violence upon himself. The British Government was naturally interested in running down the movement. Jayaprakash became its scapegoat; it spat out on him all its venom and malice. Its efforts however proved futile; Jayaprakash stood the test successfully. He set another example of moral stature by writing to the Chief Justice of the High Court of Lahore that he was not a member of the Congress Working Committee, nor was he when he escaped from the Hazaribagh prison. "I am particularly anxious to correct this information," he said, "as I do not wish the Working Committee of the AICC to be in any manner associated with my recent activities and views."[1]

Recalling the political events of the period when he was in prison, Jayaprakash was naturally unhappy at the dilatory and ambivalent attitude of the Congress leaders. Two basic questions worried him most; one, the Congress attitude towards the war; and two, the proposed partition of the country. Rajagopalachari's statement came as a rude shock to him. In Lahore Fort he used to maintain a diary to give vent to his feelings. How much torment he underwent and how restless he felt is evident from its contents.

"Let us take Rajaji at his word," wrote JP. "India divided into two states? Even a high school knowledge of Indian history should enable one to forecast the result of such a vivisection of this country. Vivisection obviously presupposes the existence of a widespread desire for separateness. Given this desire and the fact of

1. *In the Lahore Fort*, p 159

division and undoubted foreign influence of conflicting nature, India would present a picture not essentially different from that which existed at the dissolution of the great empires of Indian history. The only outcome of such a confused state would be cultural and economic backwardness, political weakness and eventual subjugation again to a strong foreign power or to more than one power."[1]

The example of the Soviet constitution, which had granted the right of self-determination to nationalities with a view to initiating the process of devolution of powers, had often been quoted by many Indian leaders. In fact, it had given a boost to those leaders who argued in support of demand for the division of India. But this was an illusion. "First, the recent Russian amendments," wrote JP, "leading to decentralisation in Russia had not broken up the Soviet Union and divided into a number of independent states. As for the *right* to secede, it is an old constitutional guarantee that exists since Lenin's time."[2] There is a difference however between the recognition of the right of separation and the actual fact of separation. So far as the Soviet Union was concerned the nature of the state has always reduced this right to a nullity. In India it was not that the units prepared to join the Indian union sought to reserve the right to secede if they found cause to do so. What was demanded was an outright separation and division of the country.[3]

Jayaprakash therefore emphatically stressed that "there is a world of difference between the two positions: the first presupposes a desire to stick together and make a serious experiment in joint nationhood, while the latter kills the very possibility of union by immediate partition. In every federal constitution of the world, where the right of secession is guaranteed, it has a twofold basis: while on the one hand it provides the ultimate solution

1. *In the Lahore Fort*, p 2
2. *Ibid*. p 4
3. *Ibid*

of international conflicts, on the other hand it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and the desire to pull together would ever make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right."[1] He expressed these views as early as 1944 when he was imprisoned in Lahore Fort. He fervently hoped that "the Congress would have no difficulty in guaranteeing this right to the federating units in India provided there was a genuine desire to stand as a united nation and to preserve national unity to the utmost extent possible. The Congress would do this precisely in the hope and belief that the experiment in united nationhood would soon remove suspicion and cement the bonds that naturrally exist among all the sections of the Indian people."[2]

He was anxious to build up a composite and united nationhood. If a suitable basis was provided by restructuring our present socio-economic system this might "remove suspicion and cement the bonds" among different nationalities, he believed. At the same time he did not rule out the right of self-determination, of course, with a proviso that its application should be limited and could be resorted to only as the ultimate solution of international conflicts. He hoped that, given the best possible solution, this right would ultimately become redundant.

This is the basic difference between Jayaprakash and western thinkers. Jayaprakash has a twofold objective: (a) to build up a composite and united nation; and (2) to provide a system within this common nationhood commensurate with the aspirations and needs of its people. The western concept of nationhood encourages separatist tendencies and ultimately sows the seeds of discontent and conflict.

This does not mean that Jayaprakash was not aware of the Muslim problem. The Muslim fear of Hindu domination of the central Indian government was genuine. Jayaprakash suggested a twofold remedy. One was to define carefully and limit the powers of the central gov-

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*

ernment and vest the residuary powers in the provincial governments. If minimum powers were left with the centre the possibility of its interfering with the provinces would be reduced to that extent. The other problem was to ensure that the powers vested in the national government were so exercised that no injustice was done to the Muslim community. The central government, as all governments would have two main functions, legislative and executive. The legislature and the executive could be so constituted that the Muslims had no cause for fear. At the same time a final guarantee could be constitutionally provided in the shape of the right to secede. The very existence of this right—of the possibility of its being exercised—would be a check on the majority.[1]

The British Government was out to split the country without giving it an opportunity to make an experiment in composite nationhood. The whole question had been viewed from a wrong perspective. Communal unity had been equated with national unity. The government had assumed that all political life in India was organised on communal lines, which was obviously not the case.[2] The conflict was between national and communal forces. The Muslim League was a communal organisation whereas the Congress was national. A settlement not between Hindus and Muslims but between national and communal outlooks. Of course the ideal for national growth would have been for national tendencies and forces to gather such strength that communalism would die out. But the existence of a third party made this impossible, and under its pressure an experiment in united and composite nationhood was suffocated and stifled.[3]

Jayaprakash did not oppose the right to self-determination, an inherent right of a community or nationality. But this right should be exercised by a territorial unit only if the experiment in joint nationhood failed. The

1. *Op cit.* p 11
2. *Ibid.* p 94
3. *Ibid.* p 65
4. *Ibid.* p 112

right of self-determination had to be exercised *after* a free Indian State has been formed and not before it.

Jayaprakash suggested that "we start as a united nation with one common constitution, framed jointly; we make a serious attempt at living together, and only in the event of failure of the experiment of joint nationhood does a territorial unit exercise its right to separate."[1] On the other hand, if "the country is partitioned, probably under British aegis, two or more separate constitutions are framed separately, and India starts as two or more national states."

He rejected the view that the entire future progress of the country depends on an agreement with Jinnah. He was confident that, given the opportunity, nationalist Muslim opinion was bound to become a force in the country.[2] The Congress leaders however wanted an immediate settlement for a national government and were impatient to come to terms with Jinnah.

Jayaprakash was of the opinion that if the Congress had prepared the country for struggle it could have averted India's partition. The Congress failed to propose such a programme. The civil disobedience movements, except perhaps the one started in 1930, had begun haphazardly and without much preparation. Congress committees devoted the greater part of their time and energy to elections—Congress elections as well as those to local bodies and provincial legislatures.[3]

Jinnah's threat of a civil war, together with British political manoeuvers, upset the Congress leaders. They were afraid to wage another struggle for independence, but were extremely eager to take control of the government of the country. Gandhi alone stood firmly and resolutely for the independence of the whole country and would not accept partition.

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid*. p 115

Gandhi and Nehru were released in 1945, and the release of the other Congress leaders followed. Jayaprakash and Lohia, imprisoned in Lahore Fort, were brought to Agra jail and were among the last to be released in early 1946.

The British Labour Party took office on July 26, 1945. This however did not change much the imperialist policy of the British Government. It held three trump cards pending the transfer of power, namely (1) control over the services, (2) paramountcy, and (3) control over the armed forces. On September 19, 1945, Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy, announced a new policy. General elections were held and the Congress formed ministries in eight of the 11 provinces, the League in two.

In regard to the provinces which were to constitute Pakistan, the Congress came to power in the Northwest Frontier Province. In Sind the position of the League Ministry was precarious, and it stayed in office through continuous prorogation of the provincial assembly by the Governor.[1] In Bengal, there was a Muslim League Ministry, but a movement for a united sovereign Bengal was led by its Chief Minister, so that it was feared that East Bengal might refuse to join Pakistan. In Punjab, a Unionist-Congress Sikh coalition was in power. It cut across communal alignments and anti-Pakistan feelings were gaining strength.[2]

Muslim League

The League was aware of its weakening position. It knew that if it wished to realise its cherished aim of Pakistan it had to leave no stone unturned to enlist the support of these states. It therefore embarked on a programme of "direct action" to overthrow the Congress-dominated ministries in Assam, Punjab and the Northwest

1. *Mahatma—The Last Phase,* Vol II, p 6
2. *Ibid.* p 5

Frontier. Its National Guards went into action and threatened a civil war.

Commenting on the communal riots in Punjab, JP said on March 22, 1947 that the recent developments in the province clearly "indicates that the present disturbances were fully planned and are part of a conspiracy to instal the Muslim League in office as a step towards the final installation of Pakistan."[1] A few months later, in another statement in Patna, he said his views about the Muslim League were well known. Soon after Jinnah made a somersault and rejected the British proposals, JP said that he had done so at the instance of the British Tories. That statement was completely supported by subsequent disclosures. The communal threat was in reality not a communal threat alone. British imperialist interests represented by the British Tories and the British bureaucracy and big businessmen in India were making a last desparate attempt to tide over the crisis.

The Congress members of the Interim Government were themselves deeply worried over the intrigues of British officials. Even Sardar Patel had to confess that "in the five districts where havoc was being wrought, five British officers were in power and nothing could be done."[2] "I tried to get the District Magistrate of Gurgaon transferred," he disclosed. "I could not succeed, and the officer there arrested leading Congressmen when they were not at fault and put them in jail as hostages."[3]

On 20 February, 1947, the British made another declaration affirming their desire to complete the transfer of power not later than June 1948. This served as a green signal to the Muslim League and a wave of communal riots shook the country. The London Times reported that "Muslim separatism is deriving encouragement from the language of the white paper."[4]

The similarity of the pattern followed by communal

1. *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol I, Jan-June 1947
2. *The Last Phase*, Vol II, p 154
3. *Ibid*
4. *Ibid*. p 4

riots everywhere confirmed the fear that there was a deliberate and well-conceived plan behind them. Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan—non-Pushtu speaking areas in NWFP dominated by Punjabis—were ravaged by riots. Colin Reid of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote from Peshawar: "Agent provocateurs from other provinces have been stirring Muslim feelings here by displaying photographs of skulls and torn fragments of the Koran—from Bihar."[1]

Reports were also forthcoming that "some commandos, who had been working behind the Japanese lines in Burma under Brigadier Wyngate, were found engaged in disruptive activity. How they infiltrated into India was a mystery. Brisk, illegal traffic in arms was going on with the connivance and sometimes active cooperation of the British and Indian military officers. It had grown into an open scandal. Secret dumps of illegal arms, including in one instance over a thousand sten guns, were discovered at Nagpur, Jabalpur, Kanpur and several other places. Later, the Congress High Command found documentary evidence of the complicity of the Political Department; how in league with certain princes it was busy hatching a conspiracy to break up India's Unity. Among other things, it brought to light a well-laid plan to run in large supplies of arms through some of the states to organise a D-Day all over India."[2]

When the Congress leaders were aware of this conspiracy of the British Government in alliance with the Muslim League, why did they deliberately walk into the trap? When they had no control over the army and the bureaucracy why did they agree to form a government? When Gandhi went on insisting that he would not accept a truncated India, why did they accept the Cabinet Mission proposal? The answers to these questions reveal the state of mind of the Congress leaders.

1. *Op cit.* p 13
2. *Ibid.* p 156

Interim Government

Nehru became Congress president on May 16, 1946, and a month later the Viceroy invited him to form an interim government. AICC met in Bombay in July 1946 to consider the mission's plan[1] and approved the Working Committee's resolution by 204 to 51. The Congress was committed to participate in a constituent assembly consisting of members elected indirectly by the provincial assemblies, which in turn were elected under the Act of 1935 by no more than 15 percent of the people. This means that 85 percent of the people in the provinces had no representation whatsoever in the Constituent Assembly. Similarly the representation from the princely states was unrepresentative in character. Out of a total of 69 members from them, 28 were the nominees of rulers and 41 "elected." These 41 were not elected in fact; they were nominees of the Congress bosses who dominated the All-India States Peoples' Conference.

Jayaprakash was not happy at Congress participation in the Constituent Assembly. On July 12, 1946, he made a press statement to that effect.[2] He also reaffirmed that his party members would not seek election to the assembly. Spearheading the leftwing opposition, he said: "The Constituent Assembly is the creation of the British and it can never bring us the freedom that we have been fighting for years."[3] The British Cabinet Mission had not come to deliver freedom to India but to play the mediator between the Congress and the Muslim League.[4] The Constituent Assembly, as shaped by the British Government, was not the "outcome of the strength of the people."[5]

Nehru had deviated from his earlier stand on the assembly. From the beginning of the negotiations with the British he had been advocating a body elected on the

1. The British Government had sent a three-member mission
2. *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol II, 1946
3. *Ibid*
4. *Ibid*
5. *Ibid*

basis of adult franchise, and his acceptance of the pattern prescribed by the British Government came as a shock to his socialist friends in the Congress.

Jayaprakash suggested at a meeting of AICC that the Congress should prepare the country for another struggle for independence. Achyut joined him in opposing the Working Committee's decision. "How could the Congress," he asked, "having agreed to enter the Constituent assembly, say that it did not wish to participate in grouping? The Congress Working Committee had said that they had accepted the clause relating to grouping with their own interpretation. Jinnah had his own interpretation which was opposed to the interpretation of the Congress. The correspondence published so far does not contain any evidence of the Cabinet delegation accepting the Congress interpretation of the grouping clause. On the contrary, the Cabinet Mission had made it clear that the Congress interpretation of the clause was not in accord with the intentions of the Cabinet Mission."[1]

Gandhi's sorrow knew no bounds. "I said in one of my speeches at Delhi that I saw darkness all around me. I told the Working Committee that as I could not see light I could not advise them. My mind today is dark as it was in Delhi. Therefore, I will give the same advice to Jayaprakash. I want you to accept or reject the resolution not because I ask you to accept it or Jayaprakash asks you to reject it or the Working Committee wants you to accept it."[2] He was speaking at the Congress session in July 1946.

AICC met again in Meerut from November 23 to 24, 1946. Moving a resolution on the Congress manifesto, Jayaprakash held that the Committee rather than the Congress members of the Constituent Assembly were competent to decide the shape of swaraj in the light of the Congress manifesto. For "*swaraj* cannot be real for the masses unless it makes possible the achievement of a

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*

society in which democracy extends from the political to the social and economic spheres, and in which there would be no opportunity for privileged classes to exploit the bulk of the people, nor for gross inequalities such as exist at present. Such a society would ensure individual liberty, equality of opportunity and the fullest scope for every citizen for development of his personality."[1]

Acharya Narendra Dev moved another resolution on the Constituent Assembly and this was seconded by Rao Saheb Patwardhan. The resolution stated: "This Congress declares that it stands for an independent sovereign republic wherein all powers and authorities are deprived from the people, and for a constitution wherein social objectives are laid down to promote freedom, progress and equal opportunity for all the people of India, so that this ancient land may attain its rightful and honourable place in the world and make its full contribution to the promotion of world peace and the progress and welfare of mankind, and directs all Congressmen to work to this end."[2] AICC adopted this resolution unanimously. But true to the tradition of a hiatus between precept and practice among Congressmen it remained on paper and has still to be carried out.

AICC met again in New Delhi on September 23 to implement the decision of the Congress leaders to form an interim government. Nehru reviewed the circumstances in which the Working Committee decided to enter the government. Jayaprakash condemned the policy of the Congress which led it to join the government.[3]

"The Congress leaders," said Achyut, "by their participation in the Interim Government, were treading on very slippery ground. At the AICC meeting of Bombay the president and other leaders assured the committee that the Congress was entering the Constituent Assembly without any commitment. But later on they had to declare that they accepted the Cabinet Mission's statements

1. *Op cit.* p 121
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid.* p 242

in its entirety."[1]

He gave a timely warning that the administration of India should not be carried on with the help of alien troops who must be withdrawn. He would prefer Hindus and Muslims to fight among themselves rather than keep foreign troops in India to maintain order.[2]

The Socialist leaders remained neutral on this question, finding themselves in a dilemma. The Congress leaders were seeking a mandate from AICC after they had formed a government. JP therefore wrote that "the resolution asked us to ratify the formation of the Interim Government. We could not do so because from the beginning we were opposed to any settlement with the British Government at this stage. The formation of the Interim Government was then a step in a process of settlement to which we were basically opposed. The government had already been formed and the Socialist leaders felt that the question of opposition did not arise at this stage. Had that government not come into being, it was given to us to oppose its formation. But having once been formed it would have been the height of irresponsibility to ask it to resign immediately."[3]

On July 27, 1946 the League withdrew its acceptance of the mission's long-term plan and called on August 16 for "direct action" to achieve Pakistan. For the subsequent 18 months the subcontinent was plunged in bloodshed and riots. The orgy of violence reached unprecedented heights and spread from Calcutta to Noakhali district of East Bengal and from there to Bihar. It ultimately reached Punjab and NWFP.

The British Cabinet released a statement on December 6, 1946, saying: "There has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except upon the basis of an agreed procedure. Should a constitution come to be framed by a constituent assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been re-

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*
3. Jayaprakash Narayan—*Neutrality* (unpublished)

presented (i.e., the Muslim League), His Majesty's Government could not of course contemplate—as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate—forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country."[1] A few months before Attlee had said in the House of Commons that the minorities would not be allowed to veto the advance of the majority.[2] But the latest declaration superseded Attlee's statement and gave a new lease of life to Jinnah's demand for Pakistan.

The Congress leaders were locked with Jinnah in a two-pronged battle—one at the level of wits and the other in the streets. The League had decided to boycott the Constituent Assembly until its demand for Pakistan was conceded. But it joined the Interim Government later to strengthen its hand in pursuit of this demand. It also took the struggle on to the streets in the form of violence and bloodshed. The Congress leaders found themselves unable to cope with the situation as the British Government was supporting the League by making frequent policy declarations in its favour. The Congress had earlier proved itself capable of giving an effective fight to the British Government, now it was afraid to take the risk, for power had become the overriding consideration. Its leaders forced the nation to walk into a spider's web skilfully spun by the British imperialists.

Nehru moved a resolution in AICC on January 6, 1947, advising acceptance of the December 6 declaration. Though a member of the Congress Working Committee Jayaprakash opposed the resolution. He even offered his resignation from the Committee to the Congress president. He held the view that the declaration would push the situation one more step forward to the ulimate acceptance of Pakistan.

"I feel distressed sometimes," he said, "by the way AICC invariably sets the seal of approval on every decision of the Working Committee, and I feel it may be a good thing if I resigned from AICC also. If ever there

1. *Nehru—A Political Biography*, pp 326-327
2. *Ibid*

was a time to disagree with the Working Committee, it is now. We have accepted decisions till now, but the time may come when we shall have to part company."[1]

The Congress leaders however rejected his plea on the ground that it would lead to a civil war. This was however an imaginary fear. On January 5, addressing a press conference in Lahore, Jayaprakash said: "I do not think that a revolution will lead to a civil war. A civil war only comes when there is a fight for loaves and fishes."[2] But the Congress was steadily yielding to the pressures of the British Government and moving into its traps while the League was busy intensifying its demand for Pakistan. The British Government held the strings—invisible but invincible—behind the scenes. Disaster was inescapable, for the Congress was not prepared to wage a struggle for independence. Gandhi had led three successive struggles and now felt distressed at the performance of the Congress leaders.

He said on May 31, 1947: "Even if the whole of India burns, we shall not concede Pakistan, even if the Muslims demand it at the point of the sword."[3] But as Brecher says "those were mere words, for power in the Congress now lay with Nehru and Patel."[4]

Gandhi was ploughing his lonely furrow. The young Socialists in the Congress too felt disappointed. The Congress leaders, who in the 1920s and 1930s had displayed high spirits and determination to fight to death for independence, now showed their feet of clay. They declaimed loudly, but showed only timidity and weakness in practice. To achieve independence and at the same time retain India as a single unit was now a cry in the wilderness. To capture power was the sole objective of these leaders.

These developments had naturally started a process of rethinking among the Socialist leaders. Jayaprakash

1. *The Leader,* Allahabad, January 8, 1947
2. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika,* Calcutta, January 7, 1947
3. *Nehru—A Political Biography,* p 347
4. *Ibid*

prepared a small note for circulation among his colleagues. "The phrase united front of all anti-imperialist forces is meaningless to me today," he wrote. "At the same time the slogan of 'one leader' etc is foolish and totalitarian... An independent Socialist Party of India, based on democratic socialism, should be formed. Its members should not be members of the Congress, but it should be friendly to it, and till independence is won should seek to work in cooperation with it. I have decided to leave the Congress, and work towards the objective of democratic socialism."[1]

The sinners of partition had combined in a trinity—the imperial government of Great Britain, the Muslim League and the Congress leaders. Hindu communalism was no less responsible. To hold one leader more responsible than others is an exercise in futility. They were all equally responsible.

Process of Nation-Building

The process of nation-building is not based on any rigid formula. Nor does any single factor such as religion, race, language or ideology constitute nationhood. The forces of nationalism are inherent in modern social life. Several variables initiate, help and build up the process of nationalism.

The problem of nationalism has been a baffling one since nations came into being. There have been two main trends of nation-building in Europe. Nations such as the French, English, Portuguese and Spanish were built by the political power of monarchies on more diverse foundations. The concept of a nation was regarded as the result of a *vouloir-vivre collective* and the product of a "common consciousness and sharing common ideas than from any racial, linguistic or cultural inheritance."[2] But after the first world war it assumed a new meaning. Emphasis was shifted to the nation-

1. JP's document, 1946 (unpublished)
2. *The Nation State and National Self-Determination,* p 121-22

state having nationality as the basis of statehood. This change brought to the fore the question of self-determination. But this new concept appeared to be more politically motivated and dangerous to peace. This was apparent from its application in the East European countries when the war was over. The western countries prevented the people of Asia and Africa from exercising this right, but it was enforced in Eastern Europe. The reason was obvious—a sinister design to weaken and destroy the main enemies of the allies—Germany and the multi-ethenic Austro-Hungarian Empire in Central Europe. According to a political scientist nine million lives were sacrificed by both sides in the war in defence of their national interests. Around one key fortress on the western front, Verdun, casualities reached the figure of 650,00 killed, eight times the number killed by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. Mao Tse tung once declared that in a third world war 300 million Chinese might perish, leaving another 300 million safe to rebuild the Chinese nation swiftly.[1]

The USA remained lukewarm to this theory. Abraham Lincoln, said to be the father of American democracy, faltered, and in fact retreated from giving effect to this right in his country. In 1848 he proclaimed that "any people anywhere, being inclined so and having the power, have the *right* to rise up and shake off the existing governments and form a new one, which suits them better.."[2] But he later changed his position and viewed "the secession of the southern confederacy as inferior to the concept of the preservation of the Union.[3] Had not the right of secession of the South been decided on the battlefield there would have been two American federations existing today between Mexico and Canada.

The same is also true of Soviet Russia. Stalin held back Transcaucasion Tartars from seceding from the Soviet states. Explaining the reason, he said, "....the

1. Ivod Duchacek—*Nations and Men,* New York, 1966, p 182
2. *Ibid,* p 89
3. *Ibid*

Transcaucasian Tartars, with their minimum of literacy, their schools controlled by the omnipotent mullahs, and their culture permeated by the religious spirit....It is not difficult to understand that to organise them into a national cultural union would be to place them under the control of the mullahs and to create a new stronghold of spiritual enslavement of the Tartar masses by their worst enemy."[1]

The concept of a nation-state is not only impractical; it is also fraught with danger. It is "loaded" with "dynamite." Harold Temperly has rightly held that "if self-determination is pushed far enough, not only every town, but every hamlet has the right to vote itself out of a state of which it may have been a part for five centuries."[2]

Cobban has raised certain basic questions. "On what grounds can we justify the revolt of the American colonists, and condemn the southern secessionists, other than those of success or failure? How can we approve the movements of the Czechs against the Hapsburg Empire and criticize the secession of the Bohemian Germans? Why was it right for Ireland to claim independence from Great Britain, and wrong for the Ulster Protestants to remain free from Catholic Irish rule? Why should not the Catholics of Tyrone and Fermanagh break away from the remainder of the six countries?....If the Muslims of the Punjab were to be emancipated from Hindu dominance, are the Sikhs not entitled? If self-determination means this kind of thing, where, and with what unit, can the process possibly stop?[3]

Yet Jinnah persisted in his demand for Pakistan. He was a politician and not a saint. He was an ambitious man. How could he remain satisfied with playing second fiddle to the Congress leaders. The man described in 1919 as the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity had now

1. *The Nation State and National Self-Determination*, p 193
2. Harold Temperly—*Epilogue to the Sixth Volume of the History of the Peace Conference*
3. *Ibid.* p 137

become implacably hostile to that idea. Religion had never been the real reason for his separatist stance. Between Maulana Azad and Jinnah the latter was more secular in every sense of the word. But Jinnah became the founder of a theocratic state while Azad toiled all through his life to build up a composite nationhood.

Communalism

Communalism is a political concept *par excellence*. To corelate religion with communalism is to ignore the essential nature of communalism. It stems from deprivation, a sense of exclusiveness, insecurity and alienation. If Deutsch's concept of social mobilisation is true man identifies himself with his community and finds in it an outlet for the expression of his sense of achievement. This invalidates the age-old elitist concept of power. Jinnah disagreed with Gandhi for Gandhi introduced mass participation in politics which baffled Jinnah. He derived all his norms and values from the bourgeois liberal philosophy of the West.

Two questions are as relevant today as they were before India became independent. One, has partition been able to solve the problem that was responsible for it? Two, is India now a nation? For the first question, the experience of the last 25 years indicates a dismal failure. There have been three wars between India and Pakistan and peace in the subcontinent is still elusive. The persistent hostility between the two neighbours has affected their economies and internal set-up. There are still 70 million Muslims in India; hatred and suspicion between Hindus and Muslims continues and the number of communal riots has increased in recent years. As to the second question, numerous problems have cropped up within India. Besides communal riots there are caste and sect riots. linguistic riots and sporadic riots on a large scale. The young are on the rampage; hijacking of government buses, raids on police stations and government buildings are becoming normal features of urban

life. Mob-police confrontation is frequent today. The Naga problem on the eastern border and Kashmir in the west, the demand for autonomy by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in the south and West Bengal in the east threaten the unity of the country.

Economic Reasons

The number of cultivators declined from 53 percent in 1961 to 45 percent in 1971 while the number of agricultural labourers went up from 17 percent in 1961 to 26 percent in 1971. The income of small landholders with five acres or less remained stationery in this period while that of big landholders multiplied sevenfold.

According to the annual report of the Reserve Bank of India, production trends in the economy indicate that the real national income (at 1960-61 prices) increased less than 4 percent in 1971-72 compared with 5.3 percent and 4.7 percent in 1969-70 and 1970-71 respectively. The current year holds no prospect of a rise in national income, for many states in the country have experienced serious drought. The report also mentions a fall in the growth of industrial output in the last three years. It declined from 7.1 percent in 1969 to 4.8 percent in 1970 and was only 2.9 percent in 1971, or less than half the target rate of 8 to 10 percent envisaged in the Fourth Plan.[1]

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry recently studied the incidence of poverty in the country. The report reveales that out of a total population of 529.5 million 218.3 million—41.2 percent—live below the poverty line. The incidence of poverty is highest in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar—38.6 million and 27 million people respectively—and these states together account for 30 percent of the total number of poverty-stricken in the country.[2]

The proportion of people living below the poverty

1. *The Indian Express,* September 15, 1972
2. *The Indian Express,* October 16, 1972

line varies from state to state: Orissa tops the list with 64.7 percent followed by Arunachal Pradesh with 57.4 percent, Nagaland 52.9 percent, Rajasthan 45.6, Madhya Pradesh 44.9, Kashmir 44.6, Andhra Pradesh 42.9, Mysore 41.3, Assam 40.6 and Tamil Nadu 40.4. An analysis of the composition of the population of these states reveals a relationship between poverty and caste and community distribution.

"When expectations of change rise rapidly," writes Daniel Bell, "the trajectory of hope inevitably will spiral faster than reality. Inevitably there will be disjunction between objective change and subjective assessment."[1] A conservative measures social change from a distant point in the past; a revolutionary from some mark in the future.

The forces of nationalism do not derive their origin from a set of rigid patterns; they arise from the sense of exclusiveness and alienation. In India there is a peculiar correlation between poverty and caste, somewhat akin to that of the Black vis-a-vis the White in the USA. Political power is also likewise the preserve of the higher castes.

Shills' counter-periphery model of nation-building and state formation[2] gives a clue to the study of nationalism. "Men have citizens in larger proportions than ever before in the large states of history, and probably more, too, than in the Greek city states at the height of the glory of their aristocratic democracies."[3]

The bulk of the population in most premodern and non-western societies lived in a sense *outside* society and did not feel its remoteness from the centre. Their remoteness from the central value system was a blessing in disguise, for they did not feel "their low position in the hierarchy of authority" or "the consequent alienation." The alienator was not active or intense. But as soon as

1. Daniel Bell—*Unstable America,* Encounter, June 1970
2. Edward Shills, *Centre and Periphery* (*The Logic of Personal Knowledge*), The Free Press, Illinois, 1961, p 128
3. *Ibid*

the man on the periphery began to feel a concern for this value system it soon set in motion the process of alienation. Several factors are responsible for this awakening. Firstly, the extended market has integrated the population into a more unified economy. Secondly, education through franchise and mass communication have greatly increased the participation of the people in the central value system. Thus with economic development, administrative and technological strengthening of authority, political democracy, urbanisation and education, the different sections of the population have come into more frequent contact with each other and created even greater mutual awareness.

The central value system finds today a wider acceptance than in other periods of history.[1] At the same time, "these changes have also increased the extent, if not the active dissensus or rejection, of the central value system. The same objects which previously engaged the attention and aroused the sentiments of a very restricted minority of population have in modern societies become concerns of much broader strata of the population."[2]

"The emergence of nationalism," Shills points out, "not just the fanatical nationalism of politicians, intellectuals and zealots, but as a sense of nationality and an affirmative feeling for one's own country, is a very important aspect of this process of the incorporation of the mass of the population into the central institutional and value system. The more passionate type of nationalism is an unpleasant and heroic manifestation of this deeper growth of civility."[3]

Thus every society is confronted with the challenge of nationalism, dormant or open. As a natural and logical corollary, not only the nonparticipation of a periphery in the central value system builds up the forces of nationalism but the gap between the emerging values and an age-old structure sets Lipset's theory of legitimacy in operation

1. *Op cit*, p 126
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid*, p 128

and thereby gives birth to a new nationalism. The questions therefore arise: (1) whether the periphery in India has at all been able to derive benefits from participation in the central value system; and (2) whether the emerging values of agalitarianism and democracy have been incorporated in the existing structure, or the prevailing institutions have been suitably restructured commensurate with the emerging values. These factors well explain the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan. The logic of these factors is bound to affect India too if they are not replied to in the affirmative.

An initial mistake was made when the constitution of free India was drawn up. The constitution determines the structure of political organisation, the quality of freedom and the outlines of social and economic life.[1] But the constitution did not facilitate social change in the country although this was imminent. Jayaprakash therefore pointed out towards the end of the 1940s that "this draft constitution would neither guarantee the freedom of the people nor make social change possible. The constitution in its present form would be a bulwark of conservatism and a powerful hinderance to full democracy. The fundamental rights of the people have been so hedged in that this leads to near nullity; the executive has been armed with such sweeping special powers as to encourage dictatorship; bicameralism even in the provinces assures conservatism; the guarantees regarding compensation for property acquired makes progressive economic policy too burdensome to be undertaken...."[2]

He therefore set forth the twofold tasks before the country: (1) to lay down the foundation for national unity by fighting against communalism and other separatist tendencies, and (2) to build up a new social order and a new polity. The second is more important since it provides the basis for the first and would pave the way for national unity. To confuse nationalism with religion is to overlook the historical process of socialisation. The question of

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—unpublished article
2. Jayaprakash Narayan—unpublished article

nationalism is bound up with the social, economic and political problems since new values have been set in motion by the release of new forces stemming from modernisation. An appropriate answer to the challenge of nationalism is to be found in a new social structure embodying new emergent values rather than the formation of a new national state.

The Congress chose to follow the policy from the wrong end. "The Congress," wrote JP, "has become a source of power and political advancement. Naturally, vested interests have grown and are fast growing within it, and with them corruption and jobbery. The Congress elections, beginning with enrolment of members, have become a racket and self-seeking and power politics have become rampant. This rising tide of selfish politics is the greatest barrier today in the path of the Congress advancing towards socialism."[1]

Jayaprakash had undergone the bitter experience of power politics during the freedom movement. India's division had been perhaps a logical and natural culmination of power politics. Gandhi too had advocated compromise and reconciliation with the government, but his approach was totally different from that of other Congress leaders. He never shirked a struggle when he thought it fit to do so. It were his allies in the Congress who were not prepared to go all the way with him.

Power Politics

Is a polity based on power politics suitable to underdeveloped countries like India? There is a definite view that it is alien to this soil and suffers from several abuses. The problem of corruption is one of them. Today it is so widespread in India that it impedes the whole process of development. Discussing this question in his book *Asian Drama,* Gunnar Myrdal writes:

"When we observe that corruption is more prevalent

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—*Will the Socialists Leave the Congress?*

in South Asia than in the developed western countries, we are implying a difference in mores as to where, how and when to make a personal gain. While it is, on the one hand, exceedingly difficult in South Asia to introduce profit motives and market behaviour into the sector of social life where they operate in the West—that is, the economic sphere—it is, on the other hand, difficult to eliminate motivations of private gain from the sector where they have been suppressed in the West—the sphere of public responsibility and power."[1] Myrdal infers that "in South Asia those vested with official authority and power very often exploit their position in order to make gain for themselves, their family, or social group. This is so whether that position is the high one of a minister, a member of legislature, or a superior official whose consent or cooperation is needed to obtain a licence or settle a business deal or the humble position of a petty clerk who can delay or prevent the presentation of an application, the use of a railroad car, or the prompt opening of the gates over the track."[2]

So Jayaprakash said that people interested primarily in self-advancement do not worry much about ideologies and questions of social policy. They will mouth any 'ism' that is popular, Gandhism, Socialism, or any other, and pursue quietly their own ends, unperturbed by the divergence between profession and practice.[3]

JP was convinced from the beginning that if India was to grow economically it must eschew power politics. His renunciation of power politics and advocacy of participating democracy is not sudden or abrupt; it is part of a process of thinking which started soon after his release from prison in 1946. The Congress suffers from serious limitations on account of its composition and character. It is mainly a middle class organisation. It is characteristic of a member of the middle class to think not in terms of groups but personal interest. He will always try to push

1. Gunnar Myrdal—*Asian Drama*, Vol II, p 948
2. *Ibid*
3. Jayaprakash Narayan—*Will the Socialists Leave the Congress?*

himself up on the ladder of advancement. Most Congress workers are eager to grab jobs, positions and opportunities to seize the good things of life and are busy elbowing their way to them. In view of the class character of the organisation it is natural that social interests working within the Congress will, in their pursuit of self-interest, bypass any radical programme which the organisation may draw up. And there will be enough crisis at hand to justify their policy of do-nothing. The danger to Congress policies therefore arises from within it.[1] The situation has not improved since 1947; but on the contrary it has given a serious setback to the process of social change.

The country is very much in need of the long-awaited social change without which no progress is possible. Anticipating these problems, JP voiced the need to create a real socialist party, both ideologically and structurally grounded in the toiling masses of India.[2] But his concept of socialism was different from doctrinaire Marxism. He wrote on January 30, 1949: "World socialism, more so Indian socialism, would hurt its own cause if it allowed dogmatism, masquerading as science or orthodoxy, to blind itself to the historic significance of Gandhi."[3]

Speaking at a public meeting in Gujarat in 1950, he said: "I should like to state now as emphatically as I can that socialism in this country would neglect Gandhism at peril. The conventional attitude of the 'scientific socialist' is to brush aside Gandhi as a crankish old man who was so much out of date in this atomic age, who was medieval, reactionary and even an indirect apologist of vested interests. The more sophisticated among them go forward and poke fun at his theory of trusteeship and sum him up as a class collaborationist. The trouble is that the so-called scientific socialist is seldom scientific. More often than not he is just a bigoted phrasemonger. Far from being reactionary, Gandhi was a social revolutionary of an exceptionally original kind, and he has made contributions

1. *Op cit*
2. *Ibid*
3. Jayaprakash Narayan—*Socialism to Sarvodaya*, p 3

to social thought and the methodology of social change that constitute imperishable contributions to human progress and civilisation."[1]

Jayaprakash showed signs of Gandhi's influence on his thinking in the late 1940s, after which his views gradually veered round to Gandhi's ideas of social reconstruction. He differed from other socialist thinkers on the nature of power-politics, the state as the lever of social change and Gandhi's insistence on policies based on moral and ethical values.

Be it communism or liberal democracy, the process of alienation is in full swing, and this phenomenon upset Marx because of its "dehumanising" effect on human beings. He advocated communism in order to strike at the root of this evil, but in reality communism further accelerated the process. One is reminded of the biblical story: God created man in his own image, but he saw that wickedness of man was great and that every impulse in man's heart was evil. Eventually, the lord must have been grieved that he made man at all. Marx is unfortunately not alive to say as the Lord said: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast; and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Socialism

After Congress took power in 1947 the question of socialism was relegated to the background. Nehru expressed his dislike of isms. Jayaprakash's plea of socialist goals was rejected because Nehru called it a doctrinnaire approach. For Jayaprakash the value of socialism was unalterably fixed and a long controversy ensued between Nehru and him. On March 4, 1953, he wrote to Nehru: "Whether we give it or not the name of any ism, we all desire without the shadow of any doubt to create a new society in which there is no exploitation, in which there is

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—*Aaj*, June 10, 1951

economic and social equality, in which there is freedom and well-being for all. Further, these goals, for us or for that matter for any socialist, are not to be achieved in a distant future but in the soonest possible time....Those values and aims give direction and create sense of urgency which, you will agree, have been lacking in your policies."[1]

Nehru's answer was evasive and it did not indicate any commitment to socialism on his part. "You say," he replied, "that the goals and values of socialism are unalterably fixed for you and you define these goals as the creation of a new society in which there is no exploitation, in which there is economic and social equality.... Surely there is hardly any intelligent person in the world who will not agree with the goal on these values....The question is how to proceed about it and there we come up against all manner of uncertain factors, including the human material we work with. I am inclined to agree with you that a sense of urgency is lacking in the country generally and in our policies also."[2]

To Jayaprakash however the above questions were crucial, they are vital and important in respect of achievement of the goals of socialism. He told the annual conference of the Socialist Party in 1948 that "all politics is power politics" was a disastrous point of view. "According to this theory," he said, "the state becomes the only instrument of social good." But he added: The experience of totalitarian countries, whether fascist or communist, has shown that if the state is looked upon as the sole agent of social reconstruction we get nothing but a regimented society in which the state is all powerful, and popular initiative is extinct and the individual is made a cog in a vast inhuman machine." He warned his party against "the use of sordid and unethical means, including means such as lying, scandal-mongering and cheating at party elections." He suggested that "one should be content to reach these positions by virtue of one's work and service

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—Letter to Nehru (unpublished)
2. Jawaharlal Nehru—Letter of March 17, 1953

done to the cause."[1]

He stressed this again on August 26, 1951, in a letter to all the members of the National Executive. He disagreed with his colleagues on whether all the prominent members and workers of the Socialist Party should contest the forthcoming elections. He was of the view that at least one worker among them should be kept out from the election. But many of the party leaders including Acharya Narendra Dev and Asoka Mehta, did not agree with him. He wrote: "One of the decisive items of difference in our view is that state power and initiative are not the only means of building up a democratic socialist society but that popular initiative and day-to-day effort are also essential, indeed, the latter are ultimately more important. If we really believed in this, parliamentary or governmental work should have had no more importance to us than the field work among the people. If both activities are of equal importance, why should all the important men be sent to the legislature? To believe further that the same persons can do both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary work is to practise self-deception. . . .If all the important men are sent to the legislature, the task of building up the popular base and sanctions of socialism (except as agitational appendages of parliamentary work) would be relegated to secondary importance. He gave more importance to building up a popular base than state power."[2]

The emancipated individual has today become alienated, anxiety-filled, morally insecure and lonely. Regulation of the individual's life by intermediary associations was found irksome, but it has given place to the giant monistic state, truly the leviathan. Direct personal relation and participation have been replaced by their abstract,

1. Report of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Socialist Party, p 98
2. Speaking at a conference in Berlin in 1960, Jayaprakash said: "The monistic state poses problems that transcend the old ideologies of democracy and totalitarianism. Whether governments are removable or irremovable by the electors, the monistic state remains the sole centre of power in the society. The issue, therefore, is not between democracy, socialism, fascism, communism, etc. but between the present monistic state and a state in which power and functions are dispersed and shared, by other organisations of society"

anonymous and vicarious counterparts. In the midst of giant and all-pervading organisation there is disorganisation and disintegration of personal life.

After independence, however, India modelled its political and economic structure on the western pattern. This transplantation of a western structure in Indian soil not only vitiated the whole process of development in the country but also introduced all the evils of power-politics such as the double standard in conduct.

In a by-election soon after independence the Congress leaders tried to cash in on the achievements of their party in the freedom movement to enlist support for their candidate against Acharya Narendra Dev, who was universally respected as a scholar and one of the architects of the socialist movement in India. Gobind Ballabh Pant, then Chief Minister of UP, said in a speech: "Every vote lost to the Congress will weaken the hands of Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, who are fighting against tremendous odds to stabilise the newly born independence. It would demonstrate at the bar of world opinion that the Indian people have no confidence in the leaders who won them independence. This will also have far-reaching effects on issues like Hyderabad, Kashmir and the UNO Commission and will weaken India's position in international affairs."[1]

Patel said in a statement: "I have never failed to emphasise that the watchword for the country today is unity and consolidation. The Congress as far as I can see is the only organisation which can hold the country together. If you disintegrate the Congress, you disintegrate the country."[2] The Congress leaders were out to maintain their fortress of power safe.

Towards the end of 1948, Achut Patwardhan was arrested for making a speech in Poona. He was due to address a peaceful audience of about 3000 people in a small town when a score of Congressmen created a noisy scene to disrupt the meeting. Instead of stopping them the

1. *Bombay Chronicle,* June 28, 1948
2. *Ibid*

mamlatdar went up to Achyut and suggested that the meeting disband. This was extraordinary behaviour for a custodian of law and order. On Achyut's protest the official announced that he was promulgating Section 144. The crowd quietly stood its ground and Achyut refused to leave the platform. On that he and his colleagues were arrested.[1]

Union Activities

When Jayaprakash became in 1947 the president of three important all-India labour organisations, namely, the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, All-India Postmen and Telegraph Lower Grade Staff Union and All India Ordinance Factories Workers' Union, he encountered various suppressions from the government. In early 1949 the Railwaymen's Federation, the Postmen and Lower Grade Staff Union and the Union of Post and Telegraph Workers decided to take a strike ballot. Patel and K. Santhanam, then Minister of Railways, accused Jayaprakash of exploiting labour for his own political ends. Rebutting their accusation, JP said: "I don't desire to impose a political party over the head of labour, as the Congress or the Communists are trying to do. I want rather the political party to grow in the manner of the British Labour Party out of the labour movement. It is for this reason that I am advocating a change in the structure of the Socialist Party to allow the trade unions and peasant unions to control it rather than be controlled by it."[2]

The ministers were advocating a pernicious doctrine alien to democratic government. Santhanam held that "in the political field democracy could not coexist with direct action."[3] Jayaprakash retorted that "violence is surely not compatible with democracy. But peaceful, direct action is not only compatible with it, the whole essence of democracy is that it guarantees the right of the

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—Letter to Nehru, Dec 10, 1948 (unpublished)
2. *The case of Railwaymen and Other Central Government Employees* (unpublished)
3. *The National Herald*, December 15, 1948

citizen to such action. A strike is not an attempt to overthrow established society by violence; rather it is a peaceful method of collective bargaining. Satyagraha too is direct action, and democracy not only is not jeopardised by such action, it is enriched and strengthened and purified by it. It is a dangerous symptom that the new rulers of the country are too intolerant to opposition even when it is democratic, peaceful opposition.[1]

"In Mahatma Gandhi's method of civil disobedience and satyagraha," JP said, "the suppressed and exploited have found a new technique that carries the struggle forward beyond the usual peaceful limits and gives full expression to the urge for sound justice and social change."[2]

While other Congress leaders resorted to all kinds of repressive action against the opposition Nehru maintained a facade of unity, but he made no attempt to draw up a concrete programme to reconstruct Indian society. When Tandon resigned in 1951 the party presidency it was expected that Nehru would make an effort to overhaul the whole organisation and reorientate it to the socialist movement. Sardar Patel was already dead, and the Congress was no longer under the pressure of rightist elements.

In an interview with the *Times of India* on June 13, 1951 Jayaprakash said: What the country needs is a national minimum programme, drawn up by the government and opposition parties together, and implemented collectively by them irrespective of whether or not they all share governmental power."[3] He cited fighting corruption, communalism, blackmarketing and food scarcity as examples of spheres in which the Socialist Party was prepared to cooperate with the government and the Congress, provided a programme was placed before the country.[4] Speaking at a meeting in Madras on February

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—*The Case of Railwaymen and Other Central Government Employees* (unpublished)
2. *Hindustan Standard,* June 10, 1951
3. *The Times of India*, June 13, 1951
4. *Ibid*

19, 1951, he said: "Let Pandit Nehru give us a programme and I will become the recruiting sergeant for him and recruit labour on a voluntary basis to implement the programme."[1] But why would the Congress leaders seek his support. They were interested in the game of power politics for their own selfish end and a programme for social change was out of the question.

Addressing a press conference in Kanpur in 1948, Acharya Narendra Dev criticised the Congress leaders for denying the need for healthy opposition. Congressmen, he said, were engaged in power politics.

In the early 1950s Nehru showed some keenness to meet Jayaprakash. In June 1952 JP's 21-day fast and his convalescence in a nature cure clinic in Poona came in the way of such a meeting. He had undertaken the fast because of the government's failure to enforce its assurances to post and telegraph employees about the payment of wages for the period they had been on strike in 1946, though Jayaprakash explained in a statement that the fast was an act of atonement for his lapse in misunderstanding the decision of the government. The fast was not therefore directed against the Prime Minister or any member of his government.

The long-awaited meeting between Nehru and Jayaprakash ultimately took place on February 1, 1953, in Delhi. "You will remember," Nehru wrote before the meeting, "that I have been trying to meet you for many months past. This was no new urge due to any new occurrence. Long before you undertook your fast, I wrote to you and suggested that you might see me. But this could not be arranged because of your fast and subsequent convalescence. My desire to discuss these matters with you was not related to any new happening, but had been present in my mind for a long time past. It was obviously due to a feeling that we have big things to do in this country and we should approach them with our joint effort. I feel that the next five or ten years are crucial in

1. *The Times of India*, February 20, 1951

our existence. I am satisfied, if I may say so, with the rate of our progress or advances. I wanted to hasten it and I want your help to do so."[1]

There was much in common between Nehru and Jayaprakash in regard to their basic outlooks. Both of them subscribed to the goals and values of socialism, but there was a vital difference between them too. Nehru was hesitant to enforce the objectives of socialism while the socialist leader was keen to enforce them as expeditiously as possible.

"China and India," JP wrote, "are the two countries in Asia to which all Asia and Africa are looking. If India fails to present anything but a pale picture of a welfare state (which phrase I do not particularly like; Gandhi's and Vinoba's sarvodaya is a far better phrase) I am afraid the appeal to China would become irresistible, and that would affect the lives of millions and change the course of history disastrously."[2]

He continued: "If a joint effort were made by us, great hopes were aroused, and in the event of a failure—that is, in the event of the people finding out that in spite of the joint effort their lot remained unchanged—the frustration would be so complete that nothing could save the country from eventual chaos and disintegration. The task of national integration of which you spoke the other day cannot be accomplished under static conditions. If we move forward in new directions of social and economic change, the forces of integration would be vastly strengthened. The emotional and psychological climate that could be created should prove to be a powerful binding force."[3]

Jayaprakash offered Nehru a 14-point programme as a basis for cooperation. He suggested among other things, the need for constitutional reforms; a change in the whole system of administration; devolution of powers and decentralisation of authority; legal reform and nationalisa-

1. Nehru's letter dated March 17, 1953
2. JP's letter dated March 4, 1953
3. *Ibid*

tion in two spheres, namely banking and insurance and mining; development of small-unit technology and machines and the need for integrated and far reaching agrarian reform.

"You have sent me," replied Nehru, "a draft programme which includes, among other things, basic constitutional changes. Now obviously it is not easy for me to bring about these things, even though I may not be opposed to them. You refer to all kinds of other changes of law and legal procedure and administration and reorganisation of the map of India, etc. To each one of these considered separately, I have little objection and I would be happy to give thought to them. But surely, it is beyond me both as Prime Minister and as the President of the Congress to deal with such vital matters and give assurances in regard to them."[1]

The question of cooperation was thereafter left to develop by itself in the future. The lack of joint effort and cooperation between these two great leaders adversely affected India's development.

The Naga Problem

After 25 years of independence it is presumptuous to say that the entire country is now woven into a single nation. In fact, India is still going through the birth pangs of nationhood. The Naga problem for one still drags on. Hostilities between the Nagas and the Government of India broke out in this tragedy-ridden region in 1955, leading to violence for about a decade. The Nagaland Baptist Church Council, constituted a peace mission consisting of Jayaprakash, B.P. Chaliha and Michael Scott. Through the efforts of this mission, which also received support from the state government, a ceasefire was brought about between the rebel Nagas and the Indian army in 1964. But this was not a final solution to the problem.

1. Nehru's letter dated March 17, 1953

Nagaland lies on the northeast border of India, separated from Burma by the Patkoi ranges in the Himalayas. The state of Nagaland spreads over 62,000 square miles and is inhabited by 14 main tribes of Indo-Mongoloid stock with a total population of 357,000. They speak more than 30 dialects and practise different religions. Most of the elite—both political and intellectual —is Christian. The masses follow their primitive beliefs.

Dr J.N. Hutton, an authority on these tribes, holds the view that it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to propound any test by which a Naga tribe can be distinguished from the tribes of Assam or Burma which are not Nagas.[1] The history of the Nagas before the end of the 19th century is full of wars and inter-village feuds. They made frequent raids on the neighbouring regions, particularly the tea-growing areas in adjoining Assam. The British Government therefore sent armed expeditions into these secluded areas in order to chastise the rebellious Nagas.

Kohima was established in 1877 as the chief administrative centre of the Naga activities with a subcentre at Wokha; a strong police force was posted in the interior. This marked the beginning of effective administration of the area, but Tuensang district remained unadministered. The Government of India Act of 1935 defined Tuensang as a tribal area within India. There was no change in its status at the time of transfer of power, and the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and the Extra-Provincial Jurisdiction Act of the same year authorised the Government of India to continue its administration.[2]

The question whether the Nagas were independent or not before the British occupied India is not very relevant today because, firstly, the concept of a nation is modern and, secondly, India had split into several states before the British established their hold on the country.

There are however two relevant questions. One, assuming that the Nagas are an indivisible part of the Indian

1. Verrier Elwin—*Nagaland*, Shillong, 1971, p 5
2. *Ibid* p 21

nation, what is the bond of unity between them and the other communities in India? The Nagas, like the other communities, are roused to a new consciousness by expectations of change. Does the present constitution or the social structure of the country provide a legitimate outlet for the growing aspirations and needs of Naga society? The Nagas are a very small community in a vast country. It is beyond doubt that a sense of exclusiveness has existed among the Nagas for centuries. It was not possible for them to share common experiences and values with other communities in India. They obviously could not enjoy Max Weber's three basic values,[1] namely income (control over economic goods and services), prestige and power (control over the activities of other persons) in the present Indian social order.

J. Milton Yinger has classified individuals into two categories: one having "a crystallised status" and the other "uncrystallised."[2] This classification has a positive correlation with ethnic, religious or social group. Basic values are unequally distributed in a stratified society, and the Nagas belong to the second category.

Expectation of change has in recent years kindled new hope among neglected and weaker communities all over the world; they are haunted by a new dream. There can be dreams without hope, but not hope without dreams. It is therefore very important to appreciate the consequences of a wide gap between aspiration and actual achievement. While hope is receding the dream tends to spiral upwards. This hiatus threatens to disrupt society

1. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Hills (eds) *Max Weber*, 1946, pp 180-195
2. J. Milton Yinger has defined the concept "crystallised versus uncrystallised status" in his book *A Minority Group in American Society* (1965). One of the most important things about a society or about an individual is the extent to which income, prestige and power are distributed in similar or dissimilar ways. When an individual has the same ranking on each of the various scales he is said to have a crystallised status. When his ranks are different from one scale to the other his status is uncrystallised. This is not an either-or question, but of course, a variable that can range from complete or nearly complete identity of ranks to situations of extreme diversity. The degree of a person's status crystallisation is an important aspect of his experience and influences his behaviour in significant ways

at any time.

The Nagas face a similar problem. Literacy among them is rising; their conversion to Christianity has awakened them to a new consciousness and has uplifted them from the primitive level. Further, their population in relation to scarce commodities is rising fast. Whether the social system provides an outlet for the needs and aspirations of the Nagas and other tribes in India in respect of power, prestige and income will indeed provide an answer to the riddle of Indian nationhood.

Secondly, the search for identity is as natural among the Nagas as in any other community. It derives from the instinct of self-preservation; it has been accepted by experts that no culture should be enforced from above since this retards rather than helps growth.

Does the solution lie in the formation of a nation state? This poses two important considerations: one, what would happen to the national security of both India and Nagaland if the Nagas opt for a separate and sovereign state? Two, what would happen to the development of the state if it is left to itself. The population, resources and geographical position of Nagaland being what they are, independence in the sense of separation from India may not only immediately throw the Nagas back into near-primitive conditions and severely arrest their future growth but also, in view of the expansionist designs of China and its manifest ambitions in the area, endanger its independence.

It is futile to imagine that the west will rush to the help of the Nagas and save them from falling into economic and cultural ruin or from being gobbled up by Communist China. The hope that commonness of race would make China adopt a benevolent attitude has no basis in reality and can only lead to disaster for the Nagas. India naturally does not like to create vulnerable areas on its borders for the big powers to play politics in.

Jayaprakash has therefore countered the question of independence with interdependence. He holds that in the modern world there is no nation, not even the greatest,

that is truly independent. There is growing interdependence now more than independence. Nations all over the world are moving towards regional unions of one kind or another. The advance towards a West European union is an example.

Preeminently interested in peace, Jayaprakash is aware of the dangers of a nation-state which has wrecked the world twice in two major wars in the 20th century. This does not mean that Jayaprakash opposes the right of self-determination. He has pointed out that "the right of secession is a two-way traffic; while on the one hand, it provides the ultimate solution of international conflicts, on the other hand, it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and desire to pull together would ever make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right."[1]

Jayaprakash's views on the right of self-determination are contained in the document he prepared at the time of the peace talks in Nagaland. His first note of a set of three formed the basis of the peace mission proposals. While pleading for a composite nation, he is quite aware of the problems of the minority communities. He is of the view that "historical and other circumstances might dictate different terms for union of different areas in or around India."

"Rigidity in the form of the union might make for more disunity than unity and loss rather than gain of territory. In the present case, a more flexible interpretation of the term 'within the Indian union' might persuade the underground Naga leaders willingly to join...thus making the Indian union stronger and more united. Emphasis has been laid in the peace mission proposals on voluntary participation of a constituent unit. The Nagas should of their own volition become participants in the Indian Union."

The state of Nagaland, according to JP's proposals, should be completely autonomous in all internal matters;

1. Jayaprakash Narayan—*In the Lahore Fort*, p 4

it would even set up its own constituent assembly to draft a constitution for the region. JP's third note consists of two parts: one suggests an interim settlement and the other a permanent settlement. But this is possible only if the Naga federal government accepts some constitutional link with India.

JP's proposals have been opposed by people who fear that a settlement on these lines would set in motion the process of balkanising India. But these apprehensions are unfounded. The fact remains that today the man on the periphery has become conscious of central value systems, and this has intensified his sense of exclusiveness. There are only two alternatives: one is a social system appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the people, and the other the steam roller of a nation-state. If the second course is followed the problem is complicated rather than solved. JP advocates the first for peace and development of mankind.

The Communa.. Award*

The minority community in Bengal is said to have been wornged the most by the so-called Communal Award. While non-Hindu minorities have been given special treatment elsewhere, the Hindu minority of this province has been particularly discriminated against. The Hindu politicians of the province are naturally in a flurry over this and have formed a party which is called, paradoxically enough, the Nationalist Party.

Let us look at the question a little more closely.

The question whether the Communal Award is good or bad is one which admits no controversy. There cannot be two opinions about it. For me it is a sufficient reason to condemn it that it is an award of the British Premier. That high executive of imperialism could not have been allowed to commit such a grave public lapse as to do India a good turn.

The Communal Award was deliberately calculated to exploit communal tension in the interests of imperialism. Subsequent events have borne this out. We shall have further proofs when the new constitution begins to work. That a few individuals of this or that community have benefited or will benefit by it does not alter the basic reality. The Communal Award is the greatest single antinational factor in our political life today.

And that brings us to the real problem. Granted that the Communal Award is bad, what should be our attitude towards it? Shall we be foolish and play into the hands of the imperialists or shall we be wise and foil their attempts?

*Extracts from *Towards Struggle* by Jayaprakash Narayan 1935

Seeds of Discord

When we say that the Communal Award is bad, what do we mean? Where does its badness lie? Does it lie in the fact that so many seats have been given to the Muslims and so many to the Hindus, or in the fact that it has become an instrument of communal discord? From the nationalist point of view, it matters not a whit how many seats Muslims or Hindus have got. They are both Indians and, granting that seats do any good, whichever community benefits the nation benefits.

The real mischief of the Communal Award is in its potency to take advantage of our foolishness in sowing seeds of discord. If that be so, are we acting in the national interests if we deliberately aggravate that mischief? If the Muslims or Sikhs get a few more seats than the Hindus, India is not the loser; but if we fall out and quarrel among ourselves, we not only lose heavily but we do so to the tremendous profit of the outsider. To fight over the Communal Award is like the serpent swallowing his own tail.

The exasperated "nationalist" may cry: "What is the solution, then?" The solution of what, I ask him. If he is looking for a solution which will set right the disproportion between Hindu and Muslim representation in the Bengal Legislative Council, I am afraid I have no such solution for him. I am not even interested in the question. A few seats more or less for this or that community is not of the least consequence to our struggle for freedom.

Freedom Movement

If however he is looking for a solution which will bring both Muslims and Hindus in their full strength into the freedom movement, I do have an answer for him, and I believe, the only answer.

The communal question in Bengal, as in other parts of the country, is largely an economic question and has

resulted from the fact that the Muslims are nearly all tenants, and the landlords are nearly all Hindus. There has always been a serious conflict between the Bengal tenant and landlord; and peasant up-risings have been quite frequent here. But since the class division nearly coincides with the communal division this conflict and these clashes have often been given a communal colour.

It is well known that religious fanaticism and economic radicalism often go hand in hand among the Muslim masses of the province. Just as the Irish under Protestant Britain clung fanatically to their Catholicism and the Czechs under Catholic Austria turned free-thinkers, so the Muslim peasants of Bengal under Hindu landlords are as easily susceptible to communal passions as to the idea of the abolition of zamindari.

In a modified form this is true even outside Bengal. Where class and communal divisions cross each other, instead of coinciding, the communal question is confined to the upper layer of the social stratum—to men who are desirous of posts and positions, seats and titles.

This being the background of the communal problem, how is it to be solved?

It is clear that if we continue to wrangle for seats in the legislatures we shall only aggravate the malady. The masses, whether Muslim, Hindu or of any other community, have no interest in the communal distribution of these seats. It may be that today they are persuaded by demagogues to support this or the other proportion of communal representation, but their basic interest lies in an entirely different manner of representation. The Hindu labourer and the Muslim labourer have identical interests, and if they are made conscious of them they would forthwith denounce and repudiate communal representation and demand the representation of their common economic and political interest.

The communal question, as it exists today, affects only a small class, the class which is directly interested, purely for the gratification of personal ambitions and desires, in legislative elections and jobs and employment

in the departments of the Government. This class, taking advantage of the broader causes of communal conflict such as exist in Bengal because of the economic circumstances I have already mentioned, seek to give, and unfortunately succeed, to their claims and wranglings a much wider sanction than they would have otherwise possessed.

Task of Nationalists

What is the duty of the nationalist in these circumstances? In my humble opinion there are only two courses he must follow if he genuinely desires to solve the communal problem. Let me remind him again that the problem consists not in amending the percentages of communal seats so as to suit better the claim of this or the other community—which invariably means the self-seeking upper fringe of that community—but to endeavour to bring all the various communities wholeheartedly into the freedom movement.

The courses that suggest themselves to me are: firstly, a total withdrawal from the wrangling for legislative seats; secondly, the linking up of the freedom movement with the economic struggle of the masses.

My first suggestion would seem to cut the ground from under the feet of the Bengal Nationalist Party which, I do not wish to deny, enjoys great popularity among the Hindu population of the province. This popularity rests however not so much on the issue being a popular one as in the fact that the educated upper class in this province has taken advantage of its prestige and of the estranged relations between the two communities to arouse popular sentiment on this entirely false issue. For the issue is a false one. The millions of the Hindus of this province cannot in any manner gain by a few more Hindu seats in the Bengal Legislative Council. Nor do these millions have interests which are different from the interests of the Muslim millions.

The Bengal Nationalist Party, unlike such parties in

some other provinces, is formed of genuine, even militant, Congressmen. I ask these friends if they are in any way helping the freedom movement, the cause of the people of the country, by generating the hostilities, the suspicions, the bickerings which must be the natural issue of their policy. I ask them if they are not weakening the movement for independence, if not diverting it into fruitless, nay dangerous, channels?

The Congress exists and Congressmen exist not to fight the Communal Award but the system whose instrument it is.

Economic Struggle

I now come to the second course. I have said that we must link the freedom movement with the economic struggle of the masses. This of course is a basic tactic with us. But just now I have to discuss it only as a solvent of the communal problem. Later, I shall return to it to consider it as a technique of mass action.

The communal problem exists, that is we fail to draw, let us say, the Muslim masses into the national struggle because we fail to inspire confidence in them. Our movement is not a mass movement. It is not the problem of the masses that we discuss, that guide our action, that determine our social philosophy. Our outlook is yet limited by middle-class ambitions and desires. That is why the distribution of seats looms so large on our horizon. If we were leading a genuine mass movement, the masses of all communities would gather round our banner; in other words, the communal problem would have ceased to exist.

As an instance of how we fail to inspire confidence among the masses let me remind you of how the Bengal Swaraj Party years ago caused a tenancy bill to be passed by the Legislative Council in the teeth of the opposition of the ryots. You will recall that Muslim opinion was bitterly hostile to that bill.

Consider for a moment what would have been the

effect had the Swaraj Party brought in, as it would have if it was a mass party, a bill which was in the interest of the ryots. It would have secured the unstinted support of the Muslim community—at least of 98 percent of it. But as it happened the Swarajists only succeeded in creating the impression that the Congress was a Hindu and zamindar organisation. This, as everyone can see, was a fatal impression so far as creating confidence was concerned.

It is clear from this incident that if we adopt a programme which is in the interest of the masses, if we participate in their struggle for economic emancipation, we shall have no difficulty in getting their support and following. And when we do that the communal problem disappears because the masses include all communities.

I therefore suggest that if Bengal Congressmen want to solve the communal problem, they must first unequivocally declare themselves for the abolition of the zamindari system and, second, they must seriously set out to inquire into the present difficulties of the tenants and organise them for their removal. A tenants' movement, with the slogan of abolition of zamindari in the foreground, is the best and only solution of the communal problem in Bengal. Besides liquidating this problem, such a movement will also prepare the masses for the achievement of independence, political and economic.

India Divided*

Shri Rajagopalachari is reported to have said the other day that he did not care if India were divided into ten different parts, each sovereign and independent of the other. His immediate inspiration for making this remarkable statement was the recent Molotov amendment to the Russian constitution.

Rajaji is too informed a politician really to believe what he has been reported to say. He apparently talks in this fashion with a view to remove the suspicions that are harboured in certain quarters and to pave the path probably for rapprochement between the Congress and the League. But he is doing himself an injustice by pretending to believe that he can ever succeed in his efforts by making fantastic and overreaching statements. The tragedy of Rajaji is due to a not uncommon fault of clever people: their proneness to discount the ability of the other fellow to see through their tricks.

But let us take Rajaji at his word. India divided into ten states? Even a high school knowledge of Indian history should enable one to forecast the result of such a vivi-section of this country. Vivisection obviously presupposes the existence of a widespread desire for separateness. Given this desire and the fact of division and undoubted foreign influences of a conflicting nature, India would present a picture not essentially different from that which existed at the dissolution of the great empires of Indian history. The only outcome of such a confused state would be cultural and economic backwardness, political weakness and eventual subjugation again to a

*In Lahore Fort, February 18, 1944

strong foreign power or to more than one power.

In fact, if the desire for the division of the country came generally to be shared by the Indian people, freedom from the present subjugation itself would become impossible, and in the place of Rajaji's ten free states of India there would be perpetuated the one undivided Indian Empire groaning under the heels of His Majesty John Bull. The forces that are working for the division of India are antifreedom forces of slavery, and between them and nationalist India no compromise is possible. To say that without such a compromise freedom could not be won is a self-contradiction. It is to underestimate grossly the strength of Indian nationalism.

Molotov Amendments

Let us turn now to the recent Russian constitutional innovation. There is no doubt that the Molotov amendments will be seized upon by all sorts of quacks to popularise their own nostrums. But for those who are seriously considering the future constitutional development of India the Russian experiment can be of very doubtful value. It is necessary to remember that the so-called decentralisation has been introduced into the Soviet state structure not as a measure of internal adjustment but to answer certain diplomatic requirements of Russia's international relations that have arisen during the war and are expected to become more pressing in the postwar period.

Internally there can be no question of loosening the central dictatorship of the Communist hierarchy. It is also essential, where Russia is concerned, to distinguish between theory and practice. In 1936 the Stalin constitution, was promulgated which was tom-tommed throughout the world by the Russian fifth column as "the most democratic constitution in the world". And yet in that very year began the most brutal suppression of political dissidents—it would be wrong to call them even political opponents—known to human history.

It may be safely presumed therefore that the new powers that have devolved upon the constituent republics of the Soviet Union are entirely for purposes of Soviet world diplomacy rather than real measures of devolution. There can also be little doubt that even while these measures of decentralisation were publicly announced secret administrative and party measures must have been taken to concentrate even more power in the hands of Stalin and his junta.

Twofold Basis of Federal Constitution

But let us for argument's sake concede that there has been a real devolution of power and political decentralisation in the Soviet Union. Does that justify a demand for the partition of India? First, the recent Russian amendments leading to decentralisation have not *broken up* the Soviet Union and divided it into a number of *independent* states. As for the right to secede, it is an old constitutional guarantee that exists since Lenin's time. But there is all the difference in the world between recognition of the right to separate and actual separation.

So far as Russia is concerned, the nature of the Russian state has always reduced this right to a nullity. In India it is not as if the units that are prepared to join the Indian Union are seeking to *reserve the right* to secede if they find cause later to do so. What is demanded is an outright separation and division of the country. There is a world of difference between the two positions: the first presupposes a desire to stick together and make a serious experiment in joint nationhood while the latter kills the very possibility of union by immediate partition.

In every federal constitution of the world where the right of secession is guaranteed it has a twofold basis: while on the one hand it provides the ultimate solution of intranational conflicts, on the other hand it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and the desire to pull together would even make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right.

I believe the Congress would have no difficulty in guaranteeing this right to the federating units in India provided there was a genuine desire to start as a united nation and to preserve national unity to the utmost extent possible. The Congress would do this precisely in the hope and belief that the experiment in united nationhood would soon remove suspicion and cement the bonds that naturally exist among all the sections of the Indian people. It can be appreciated how different from this is the position that demands immediate and initial partition of the country. To that the Congress can never agree.

Russian Constitution

Turning to Russia, the second point to note is that Russia is not just a conglomeration of independent republics but a highly centralised union with a powerful and effective central government which has the means to check disruptive tendencies and prevent the dissolution of the union.

Lastly—and this is the most important point—the Russian state is monolithic, based on a single political party, the organisation of any other party being illegal and treasonable. In view of this one-party rule, and in view of the highly centralised structure of that party, all paper freedoms, rights and enfranchisements lose their meaning.

Suppose Latvia is declared a member republic of the Soviet Union, only the Communist party of Latvia would be allowed to function there and all political, economic, cultural and social power would be centred in that party, or rather its higher bureaucracy. But the Communist Party of Latvia would not be an independent body; it would be a part of, and subject to, the all-Russian Communist Party, with the Stalin-Molotov caucus at the top.

In this fashion all the rights and freedom that the Latvian Republic would be guaranteed by the constitution of the Soviet Union would be effectively shackled and

hamstrung by this party mechanism and the suppression of all parties but the Communist Party.

If we were to draw an Indian parallel, it would be of some such fashion as this. The Congress, let us say, is the only political party that is allowed to exist anywhere in the country. The Congress then rules in every part of the country and suppresses *by force* all other rival parties. At the same time this very Congress grants the right to the various units of the Indian Union to secede if they so desire! We have only to picture this state of affairs to realise what a far cry the Russian system is for us.

Whether the Russian system is good or bad is irrelevant to the present discussion. What is of value for us is to remember that here in our own country no one worth bothering about advocates a monolithic state or one-party rule; nor is such a thing possible here, nor with the exception of British rule does any central power exist in India. In these circumstances, can the imitation of the devices of the Russian constitution be anything but fatal to us?

India's Partition

Partition of the country is proposed as a solution for the minorities problem. But will partition *solve* the problem? If we take the Muslims, for instance, and treat them as a minority, does the constitution of a state of Pakistan solve the problem of the Muslim minorities? In areas where it is proposed to establish Pakistan, the Muslims are the majority and not the minority community. Even in a united India those areas would be ruled by Muslim-majority governments and the Hindus and others would be the minorities there.

It is true that the Muslim provinces would be in a minority at the centre, but apart from that even in an undivided India they would constitute a sort of Pakistan so far as provincial and local matters are concerned and would have their own minorities. In an independent

Pakistan too the situation would remain the same except for central affairs. On the other hand in Hindustan (socalled), the part of India outside Pakistan, the Muslims would continue to be a minority community both as regards provincial and national matters.

Thus neither in Pakistan nor in Hindustan would the minority problem be solved, and the problem of the Muslim minority in areas where they are really in a minority would remain unaltered. It is clear therefore that the only object of Pakistan is to remove the Muslim-minority areas from the interference of a centre where the Muslims do not constitute a majority.

But this is a problem of which, given mutual goodwill, it should not be difficult to find a much less drastic solution. The necessity of finding such an alternative solution becomes all the greater when it is considered that a division of the country would weaken both its parts economically, politically and in every other way. After all, when Hindus and Muslims are going to live together both in Hindustan and Pakistan it appears to precipitate folly to divide the country.

Two-Nation Theory

We are aware that the Muslim League claim for partition is based on the theory that the Muslims in India constitute a separate nation and as such should have their own independent state. We do not think this claim would bear scientific scrutiny. It may conceivably be possible to claim that the Punjabis, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others, or the Sindhis, including again all the communities living in Sind, constitute a separate nation from let us say the Bengalis or the Tamils. But no social scientist would support the contention that the Punjabi Muslims and the Bengali Muslims constitute one nation and the Bengali Hindus and the Punjabi-Hindus another.

Mere religion has never formed, obviously not in Islamic lands, the basis for a common nationality. The

Arabs and Turks are both Muslims by religion but they constitute two distinct nationalities. It is very difficult to define a nation, as the League of Nations Committee on European national minorities demonstrated after an exhaustive examination of the questions; but race, language, history, culture, religion, geography, tradition—all these go to create that intangible psychological product known as nationality. None of these various factors by itself creates a nation.

People of the same race constitute separate nations as witness the Slavs; those with the same language do likewise as witness the English-speaking or Spanish-speaking nations of the world; likewise with religion, as witness the Muslims who constitute so many nations. Nor must a single nation have a single language, race or religion, as witness the Swiss, the British, the Americans, the Canadians, the Chinese. If we take race, language, history, culture, geography, religion, tradition all together then India forms one single nation much more truly and really than do the separate communities living in this country.

Nation State

However, let us concede for the sake of argument that the Muslims of India do constitute a separate nation. Does it follow necessarily that they should therefore separate from the rest of the country and constitute an independent state? Is it not possible for two nations to live together within a common state? Does not history afford examples of such common statehood? Do not the Scotch, the Welsh and the English live together under one government? Do not the German, the French and the Italian Swiss form one national state? Do not the British and French Canadians live together, is not the great American nation the result of the mingling of all the nationalities of Europe, are not practically all the South American nations multinational in composition? It seems highly illogical to demand a partition of the

country merely because the Indian Muslims consider themselves a separate nation.

Autonomous Provinces

With the national minorities problem of European and other countries there has always been associated the phenomenon of oppression of the minority nationality by the majority. In India there is no such historical tradition. In fact it was the minority community which was till recently the ruling power and the oppressed or otherwise the majority Hindu community. It is true that a lot of dust was raised by the League about oppression of the Muslims in the Congress-governed provinces. But we do not think that the charges brought against the Congress ministries by the Pirpur committee would bear examination by an impartial tribunal.

Even granting that the charges were true, would the division of the country save the Muslim minorities in these provinces from oppression by the Hindu community? The answer may be that if that oppression did not cease Pakistan would retaliate by oppressing its own Hindu minority. But this remedy, if it can be said to be a remedy, would be available to the Muslim provinces even in a united India, for the Centre, whatever its nature, could never interfere in the internal administration of the autonomous provinces.

Thus it would appear that Pakistan would solve none of the problems it seeks to except the one of the relation of the central government with the Muslim-majority provinces. We could willingly admit this solution if it did not endanger the growth and development, prosperity and safety of the whole country, including both or all its parts, and if no other solution were available.

The Muslim fear is that the central Indian Government in which Hindus will be in a majority will dominate and interfere with the Muslim provinces, as with the others. There are two ways of removing this possibility. One is to define carefully and limit the powers of the central

government and vest the residue in the provincial governments. If the minimum possible powers are left with the centre, the possibility of its interfering with the provinces would be reduced to that extent.

The next problem is to ensure the powers vested in the national government are so exercised that no injustice is done to the Muslim community. To do this it is possible to provide for checks and balances. The central government, as all governments would have two main functions—legislative and executive.

Both legislature and executive may be so constituted that the Muslims may have no cause for fear. At the same time a final guarantee may be constitutionally provided in the shape of the right to secede. The very existence of this right—of the possibility of its being exercised—would be a check on the majority.

These three measures should be enough to remove Muslim fears. At the same time they would preserve the unity of the country, which is the only guarantee of its future prosperity, development and power.

"Hindu-Muslim Unity"*

If anyone told a Congressman that the Congress was a Hindu body he would rightly feel indignant. Yet Congress leaders, other public leaders, nationalist editors, constantly talk of a Congress-League settlement as a settlement between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Why this confusion?

The reason, to my mind, is that following the cue of the British we have been led to look upon the lack of unity in India as disunity among the communities. We talk endlessly of "communal unity" and equate it with national unity. This of course assumes that all political life in India is organised on communal lines, which obviously is not the case. Then why don't we start to analyse this muddle and state the position in clear terms?

Some weeks ago, in the course of my comments on Dr Abdul Latif's book I pointed out that there are two parallel developments in India—one the organisation of political and economic and cultural life on a national basis, the other the organisation of such life on a communal basis. Examples of the first type of organisations are the Congress, the Liberal Federation, the All-India Trade Union Congress, the States Peoples' Conference, the Federation of Chambers of Conmerce and Industries, the Students' Congress, the Unionist Party and the Bangiya Krishak Proja Party.

Examples of the other type are the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim State Peoples' Conference, the Muslim Chamber of Commerce, the Muslim Students' Federation and the Akali Dal. Of these two the national

*In Lahore Fort, August 10, 1944

type of organisations have been by far the stronger, but recently fed by various adventitious circumstances the second type has been growing in strength. There has never been any conflict, though there has been difference of opinion among the first type of organisations.

National Versus Communal Forces

The conflict really is between the national and the communal forces in our national life. A settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League is not to be a settlement between Hindus and Muslims but between national and communal ways of life. The ideal thing of course for our national growth would have been for the national tendencies and forces to gather such strength that communalism would have died.

But the existence of a third party makes this impossible and an urgent need is felt now for an understanding between these forces. If such an agreement has become necessary let it be brought about, but let us not misunderstand and misrepresent the character of this development. I wish this could be made clear to the country by someone at this time. Will Gandhiji himself make it clear or will he blur the issues in his eagerness to reach an agreement?

Congress-League Settlement*

I have been feeling for some time the need to integrate my thoughts on the problem of a Congress-League settlement. I have in the past months expressed views on this subject which appear contradictory. Writing on this problem in February this year I said: "In every federal constitution of the world where the right of secession is granted it has a double aspect: while on the one hand it provides the ultimate solution of intranational conflicts, on the other hand it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and desire to pull together would ever make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right.

I believe the Congress would have no difficulty in guaranteeing this right to the federating units in India provided there was genuine desire to start as a united nation and to preserve the national unity to the utmost extent possible. The Congress would do this precisely in the hope and belief that the experiment in united nationhood would soon remove suspicions and cement the bonds that naturally exist among all the sections of the Indian people. It can be appreciated how much different from this is the position that demands immediate and initial partition of the country. To that the Congress can never agree."

Writing in the middle of July last, I said again; "The underlying principle of Rajaji's formula is contained in the Delhi resolution (of the Working Committee of the AICC). That resolution explicitly admitted the right of territories in India to self-determination. That same general idea has been put in concrete shape by Rajaji and no Congressman can take objection to it."

*In Lahore Fort, August 20, 1944

Right to Secede

There is an obvious contradiction between these two views. First, let me clear up the position of the Congress in this regard. I do not have before me the resolution of the Working Committee which conceded the right of self-determination to territories; therefore it is not clear to me in what circumstances that right was conceived to be exercised.

So far as I remember the resolution, it went on further than merely stating that the committee would not oppose the right of any territorial unit to claim self-determination. This might mean at least two things: first, that this right was to be exercised after the free Indian state had come into being; second, that it was to be exercised before the establishment of free India.

There is a great difference between the two. In the first case, we start as a united nation with one common constitution framed jointly: we make a serious attempt at living together, and only in the event of failure of the experiment of joint nationhood does a territorial unit exercise its right to separate. In the other case the country is partitioned, probably under British aegis, two or more separate constitutions are framed separately and India starts as two or more national states. I find it difficult to believe that the Working Committee had in mind the latter meaning when it framed its resolution at Delhi.

If the Working Committee conceived the exercise of the right of self-determination in the manner described in the first case above, the contradiction between my views expressed in February and July is resolved.

Rajaji's Formula

So much for the position of the Congress. The question before me is, irrespective of the Congress view of the matter, what is my own view of it today? I have followed rather carefully the present controversy over Rajaji's formula. I am to some extent acquainted with Muslim

communal opinion in Punjab through the columns of the *Inquilab, Ehsan* and *Shabhaz*.

I have found no cause to change the opinion expressed in February last. And if the Working Committee meant to allow a territorial unit of the country to separate *before* the united Indian state had come into being and an experiment in living together had been made I am opposed to that resolution. Further, if Rajaji's formula implies the same procedure I am opposed to it also.

I am prepared to go no further than conceding the right to self-determination *after* the United States of India had come into being, and after a certain specified period had elapsed during which every part and section of the country and the people had a chance freely to fashion their lives in common with other parts and sections.

The question is: what happens if the Muslim League does not accept that position? I do not for a moment believe that the League would agree to such a proposition; but I also never believed that our entire future progress was dependent on an agreement with Mr Jinnah. I have described Mr Jinnah elsewhere as the Mir Jaffar of his day. I still stick to that description. He is a conscious traitor to his country, and it is foolish to expect him to agree to anything that would be good for the country.

Nationalist Muslim Opinion

Some people are obsessed with the League's popularity with the Muslim masses. I do not believe that nationalist Muslim opinion can never become a force in the country, or that the Congress itself can never win the affection of the Muslim masses or its intelligentsia. The eagerness of those who want to come to terms with Mr Jinnah at any price is largely induced by their anxiety for the immediate establishment of a national government. I do not think there is any possibility now, short of a national revolution, of any such government being formed in wartime. As for a national revolution, it is not reason-

able any more to place it within the range of wartime possibilities.

Need for Postwar Showdown

To my mind, our present task is to prepare for a postwar showdown with the British. All our present actions must suit that future task. I am not suggesting that Gandhiji should not meet Mr Jinnah. That business has already gone too far now to cry a halt. It would have been better had no attempt been made in that direction, but now the only thing to do is to go on with it to the bitter end. But in the negotiations Gandhiji should not go beyond agreeing to Muslim majority areas exercising their right of self-determination *after* freedom has been achieved, and the United Indian state has been formed.

Mr Jinnah would reject that, naturally. But the negotiations would have fulfilled their purpose if Gandhiji could succeed in getting down on paper the League's exact demands. Then the Congress and patriotic Muslim bodies could go to the Muslim masses both with Gandhiji's offers and Mr Jinnah's demands. That clarification would, I believe, give a starting push to nationalist Muslim opinion.

Mr Rajagopalachari talked the other day of bloodshed and civil war if Mr Jinnah was not placated. On a different occasion he told Mr Savarkar that it was easy to talk of maintaining the unity of the country through civil war, but would the British allow it? One may ask Rajaji, following his own logic, would the British allow Mr Jinnah to wage civil war? To that Rajaji might reply, "No, the British would not do that either, but then we must be prepared to have the British perpetually as our masters."

That exactly is the trouble. Rajaji thinks, probably quite honestly, that unless we placate Mr Jinnah we can never hope to drive the British out of our midst. I do not agree with him. Looking back at the last 14 years of our national history, it seems to me that the Congress never

properly prepared for a mass struggle. All its civil disobedience movements, except perhaps the one started in 1930, were haphazardly begun and without much preparation. My short acquaintance with the actual functioning of the Congress in peacetime has led me to believe that the Congress has been losing touch with the masses.

If we leave aside such bodies as AISA and AIVIA which are non-Congress in constitution, or at least non-combatant bodies, the Congress has no programme of work which puts it in daily and constant touch with the people. My experience is that Congress committees devote the greater part of their time and energy to elections—Congress elections and elections to local bodies and provincial legislatures.

Preparation for Struggle

It is my firm conviction that if the Congress gave itself, say, five years for intensive preparation for a struggle through constructive and educative work among the masses and introduced vigour and energy into its organisation it might be possible to launch a struggle that would sweep all opposition away and bring the British to their knees.

I believe if this were done and, further, if an understanding were reached with such bodies as the Muslim Majlis and Jamiat-ul-Ulema, we should succeed in rallying a large section of the Muslim masses and intelligentsia, to the banner of freedom and nationalism. I believe further that if this were done Mr Jinnah's leadership would be no more than a deflated balloon and the march of events would leave him gasping by the roadside.

Indian nationalism has not become such a spent force that it must lose all hope and commit suicide. Mahatma Gandhi is evidently impatient. But I do not think he agrees with Mr Rajagopalachari that we cannot rid ourselves of British rule without an agreement with Mr Jinnah. His sturdy faith in Indian nationalism is I believe

still as sturdy as it was in August 1942. Therein lies hope—hope that Gandhiji would not, like a despairing man such as Rajaji, who even sorrows over our failure to accept the Cripps' proposals, barter away Indian nationalism by giving Mr Jinnah all he may want. Gandhiji has still his last fight to fight with the British.

I should add that if I too had despaired of Indian freedom without placating Mr Jinnah I would not have hesitated to give him all he wanted. Some people are found asking: "Will you have two Indias, both free, or one India, slave?" I do not believe that without division of the country we cannot be free. In fact, knowing Mr Jinnah and the League, in case we accept Pakistan I fear we shall have both division and slavery.

Division of India

I shall conclude with a few words about why I oppose the division of the country before we have made a serious attempt to live together in a united and free India. I think such division will solve none of our present problems and will create others more serious than those existing today. The Muslim states are bound to be British protectorates, the Muslim communal leaders themselves asking for that status. This would mean the existence of a third party on Indian soil, and this will be a source of great worry to the Indian nation.

I have no prejudice against the Muslims. If the political unity of the country was maintained I would be prepared to go to the farthest limit to assuage their fears of what is termed as Hindu domination. I love my country and do not care if its 400 millions are Muslims or Christians or Hindus. But I do care whether or not they are free and happy and prosperous. I believe firmly that before long they will be free and happy, and not long after prosperous too.

Transition to Socialism*

I have held that the fight for democracy, which has been waged these many years under the leadership of the Congress, is very near success today. But the imperial power, together with its main supports, namely the Muslim League and the princely order, stands even now pretty solidly in our way. The shooting talk that the British have made up their minds to quit is calculated merely to deceive the people and quieten their fears, the fears being that instead of eliminating the obstacles in our path we might compromise with them and thus jeopardise freedom and democracy. When the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission's proposals, it compromised itself seriously with the foreign power as well as with communalism and the feudal order. Indian democracy, built on the foundation of that compromise, cannot be full democracy, the kind of democracy that would offer the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism.

British rule is undemocratic, princely rule is undemocratic, communalism is undemocratic. All three are ranged against us today. They make a powerful combination. How can we conquer these forces of reaction? Surely not by giving in to them, surely not by making concessions. Our nationalist leadership believes today that by making a few compromises with these forces it would be possible to acquire so much political power as to be able later to destroy the enemies of democracy. But it has forgotten that political power so acquired will not be held exclusively by the forces of nationalism and democracy but also jointly by the forces of reaction.

Having got into power, these forces will be strengthened

*Extracts from an article enitled "Transition to Socialism" published in *Janata,* official organ of the Socialist Party, on January 26, 1947

rather than weakened. Recent history shows that every concession hitherto made to communalism has only made it stronger till it has become the present Frankenstein monster. There is no reason to believe that concessions made in the future will produce a contrary result. Rather, the danger is that concessions made on the basic principles of our national life would result in such a sickly and diseased India that life for it would hardly be worth living. Only a major revolution could then bring it back to healthy life.

Renew the Quit India Demand

What then is the way to defeat the forces of reaction and the enemies of democracy ranged against us? The only way is to renew the demand "quit India" and mobilise the people for a final challenge to the foreign power. That power is our primary enemy and instigates and supports the reactionary forces in this country. That power has to be destroyed first. Faced with a final challenge to its existence that power is likely to attempt to rally its reactionary allies, but this danger has to be met.

Even today, when a policy of conciliation is being followed the same game is being played and every effort is being made to thwart the forces of freedom and democracy. In the present circumstances these efforts are succeeding to a degree where freedom and democracy are not only gravely imperilled but are denied. It is my firm conviction that in the course of a direct struggle these efforts could not succeed to the same degree, if to any degree at all. I believe that in the fire of revolution alone can burn down the edifice of imperialism together with the supporting edifices of feudalism and communalism.

I clearly see a major revolution intervening on our road to Socialism. I see further that the success of that revolution depends as much on its political as its social ends. In facts, I do not see that revolution succeeding if only "quit India" were inscribed in its banners. Its banners must proclaim other objectives too: "Land to him who

tills it"; "Wealth to those who produce it"; "Praja Raj in the states"; and others. The revolution must mobilise fully the peasants, the workers in the factories, the students, the city poor and the middle classes. Such a revolution will not only lead to the establishment of full democracy in India but also take us a considerable way on the road to socialism. Such a revolution will place at the top not the capitalist class but the toiling and the middle class. While such a revolution will not destroy capitalism at one stroke it would put it on the defensive and start it on a losing race.

How can such a revolution be brought about? Does the present situation justify a faith in such a revolution? I believe it does. India is clearly passing through revolutionary times. There is discontent among the people, among the peasants, among the workers, among the states' people. The youth of the country is restive. There is universal anger and disgust at the machinations of the British. The people are fed up with riots and mutual murder. Only there is no requisite effort to gather and organise these forces of revolution.

The Congress has so far been the spearhead of the national revolution. But at the present moment Congress leadership seems to have decisively and resolutely turned its face away from revolution. Even the mention of the word irks our leaders and they poke fun at those who utter that word. The attitude of the leaders affects the whole Congress organisation, which has become today an appendage of Congress governments. And yet the fact remains that a nationwide struggle against the British power can be launched only if the Congress takes the initiative.

Twofold Tasks

Thus we are faced with a difficult position. Congressmen who are convinced of the necessity of a revolutionary struggle have a twofold task before them: (1) to prepare the people through the Congress organisations (where possible) and other organisations such as trade unions,

kisan sabhas, student and volunteer bodies, etc for a revolutionary struggle; and (2) they have to exert the utmost pressure on the Congress from within to persuade or compel it to accept a revolutionary course of action.

It is likely that they may not achieve much success in the second task, but as I read the immediate future I feel convinced that circumstances themselves will force the Congress once again, as in 1942 to take recourse to direct action. Therefore notwithstanding whether our point of view receives support in the counsels of the Congress or not we should be ready for the eventuality I have just mentioned.

I have said above that the success of the coming revolution depends upon the extent to which the economic and social urges of the masses find in it their expression. Therefore it is the task of socialist Congressmen, particularly of the Congress Socialist Party, to ensure that in the preparatory-work every care is taken to develop and intensify the social consciousness of the masses and strengthen the class organisations and struggles through which alone that consciousness is best expressed and developed.

The Congress, which has been and remains the spear-head of the national revolution, has been slowly taking note of the economic urges of the people. The resolution on social objectives adopted by the Meerut session of the Congress goes a very long way towards socialism. The difficulty however seems to be that to the dominant section of the Congress, which seems at bottom to be guided by capitalistic ideas but which exploits the name of Mahatma Gandhi, these declarations of social policy are merely tactical moves to placate the masses in order not to lose their support. If we review the work of the Congress Governments in the provinces and at the Centre, we shall find apart from words and resolutions no concrete proof that the social policy laid down in Congress manifestoes and resolutions has any binding or compelling force. Therefore the course of the transition to socialism would depend to a very large extent on the success of the socialist

movement in influencing, not only in words but also in deeds, the national movement.

How best can this influence be exercised? CSP has tried to fulfill this task by working both within and without the Congress. But already the question of a separation between the socialist and nationalist movement has been raised. If the possibility of an open conflict with the British were not before us, if the possibility of the Congress being driven willy nilly into this conflict were not present, if also it were not true that a national struggle could be launched in the near future only under the auspices of the Congress and not in opposition to it, I would not have hesitated to advise that the socialist movement should now part company with the Congress.

But today these possibilities and considerations make such a step fraught with danger, even disaster. If however it is found that the Congress has forsaken the revolutionary path and is determined, whatever compromises it might have to make, to remain in the government, we should have come to the parting of the ways. Under these conditions the Congress would be bound to pass more and more under the influence of vested interests and its structure become more and more rigid and undemocratic, banning the growth of socialist forces within its folds we have to go forward keeping both the possibilities in view.

Difficult Path

Thus we see that the transition to socialism is not a straight path but a tangle of conflicting paths. Therefore it is not possible to be doctrinaire about the policies of this period. I have reaffirmed my faith in democratic socialism, which is the only true socialism. I have stated clearly that in a full and untrammelled democracy I shall adopt democratic means to achieve socialism.

But faced as we are with undemocratic forces which have to be defeated and destroyed before socialism can be ushered in, I conceive a period of trouble and turmoil, a revolutionary phase of the transition, a phase in which

not only the democratic revolution should be completed but also considerable progress made towards socialism. A state and society emerging from such a revolution should then be able to pass in a democratic manner into full socialism.

But there may be all manner of upsets in this scheme of development. The coming revolution as visualised may not come at all, and the country may be saddled with undemocratic rule. Democratic methods would be of no avail then, and a different sort of revolution might take place, a revolution based on a different alignment of classes and led mainly by the socialist forces in the country, which should then be organised independently as the Socialist Party of India. Or again, taking advantage of the times of turmoil ahead, the capitalist, feudal and communal elements might make a bid, in alliance with the right wing of the national movement, to establish their dictatorial rule. Democratic means would again be of no avail, and the only alternative would be to counter the reactionary move by establishing a dictatorship of the toiling masses, a dictatorship not of any party or working class alone but of the workers, peasants and city poor. Other developments would require other tactics, other solutions.

Pragmatic Approach

I said at the outset that there was only one correct path to our goal. I have not gainsaid it by what I have just written. There is indeed only one correct path from each given situation; if we follow the same unchanging path in every changing situation we can only end in disaster. What I wrote at the outset was in the context of certain ideal assumptions. It was necessary to do so to put my views clearly.

But we cannot experiment with socialism under controlled conditions as in a laboratory. Therefore, keeping our objectives in view and not departing from basic principles, we must be ready to adopt whatever methods

and tactics a changing situation might demand. I realise that there are pitfalls and dangers in such a course, but it is better to face these dangers than to lose everything by being rigid and doctrinaire.

Whatever form the transition to socialism might take, I should make it clear in conclusion that the overall requirements for socialism to be achieved is the existence of a well-organised, powerful socialist party, supported mainly by workers' and peasants' organisations and organisations of the youth (volunteer, student, etc), and the city poor. From small beginnings CSP has reached its present position of strength and influence. It is the party of socialism in this country, the party of the future.

Like the country itself CSP is passing through a transition and it must soon acquire forms that will represent and express the political and economic and social urges of the oppressed masses. This is the task before the coming convention of the party which is to meet from February 26, at Kanpur.

Freedom—The Only Solution*

My only solution to the communal problem is freedom —complete and real.

Any other solution would be putting the cart before the horse, because the British are here and they encourage all internal quarrels. A study of the history of a communal problem shows that whenever there was a possibility of the communities coming together the British stepped in to prevent it.

The Muslim League is a "British front". With the British out of this country, this front will collapse by itself.

The Congress will not budge an inch from the stand it has taken on the question of the inclusion of a nationalist Muslim in the present Interim Government. Sixty years of Congress history cannot be negotiated in a moment. The Congress has gone as far as possible to satisfy the Muslim League's reasonable demands.

The Interim Government was "only a stroke of fortune" for the Congress. The British are now endeavouring to get the Muslim League into the Cabinet so that there might be differences inside the Cabinet. This would allow Lord Wavell to act as arbitrator. With the Muslim League trying to organise the students, workers and merchants on a communal basis, the British would get a chance to continue their stay in India.

I am not afraid of the League's call for direct action. Why should we be? Has any country attained independence or come into its own without trouble and even civil war?

But I think the "direct action" programme will recoil on Mr Jinnah's head.

*Interview with the Associated Press of India, October 3, 1946

India's Partition : A Compromise Deal*

There are some who have tried to trace the underlying cause of the civil strife that has been raging in the country in the last many months to the cult of violence preached during the August Revolution. This is an oversimplification. The civil strife was not spontaneous in origin but a planned and directed movement; and its roots go down to imperialist policies.

The theory and strategy of the strife have been drawn liberally from European fascism and were much influenced by the human disintegration caused by totalitarianism and the world war. In a small measure some of the dark aspects of the August movement might be responsible for the recent disorders; and while that may be granted it is necessary for our social doctors to attend to another symptom of the present national malaise. Along with civil strife, there is visible on every side a sudden deterioration in the standards of public conduct.

Men who till the other day talked of the high ideals of nonviolence and truth seem suddenly to have put all their ideals away and are found submerged in the game of power politics and nepotism, and some even in corruption. Why is this so? Why is it that even our nationalism has proved in so many cases to be only skindeep? Why is communalism creeping into out hearts, and why provincialism, caste feeling and other kindred poisons?

I submit that the reason is that the nonviolence and truth that may be so loudly professed were mere make-believe and convenient covers and not articles of faith. It seems to me that it was better to have believed in the

*Extracts from a speech at the Sixth Annual Conference of the Socialist Party, Nasik 1948

clean weapon of violence than to have used nonviolence and truth as mere cloaks. I am not justifying violence, which too, it should be remembered, has its own moral limits; all that I am saying is that while violence may lead to harmful results, false nonviolence might do greater harm.

Cabinet Mission

Another criticism recently been made is that we have always failed to anticipate events, or that our estimate of future events has more often than not turned out to be false. For instance, it is said that history proved us wrong when we suggested that the settlement with the Cabinet Mission was not going to bear fruit and that another conflict was unavoidable with the British. In the same way, we are accused of wrong judgment when we boycotted the Constituent Assembly on the ground that it would not be the final authority to draft the constitution of free India. It is easy, as the common saying goes, to be wise after the event; but there are apparently some to whom even events do not seem to teach wisdom.

I fail to see how our judgment has been falsified by history. I have no doubt that had we not given up our fundamentals a conflict with the British was inescapable. What the form of that conflict would have been is difficult to tell. But after the conspiracy hatched by Wavell and Jinnah had succeeded the Congress had clearly no alternative but to throw overboard the entire agreement and go into the wilderness again. That was avoided at a great price, a price that none of us ever thought the Congress would agree to pay in any circumstances.

Congress Failure

The whole strategy of the Socialist Party and our reading of the situation were based on the assumption that the Congress would never accept partition. If partition

had not been accepted, the Congress had no alternative but to resign from the Interim Government and face the British once again on the issue of full independence and an undivided India. It is true that the Congress had accepted, with the concurrence of its socialist wing, the partition of self-determination. But that principle was to be applied after the British had quit and not with their help and under their aegis. When the Congress accepted partition it accepted partial and not complete independence. One would have thought that those who did this would at least have enough fairness not to accuse others of wrong anticipation of events.

I repeat once again that had the Congress not deviated from its true path and compromised with its principles there would have been no alternative for it but to follow the course of action the Socialist Party suggested.

Coming to the Constituent Assembly, it has been suggested that, having once boycotted the Constituent Assembly, we now feel sorry that we have been left out of the picture. People are wont to judge others by the same standards of conduct as their own. So far as we are concerned, we do not at all regret having boycotted the assembly. We were anxious by doing so to make it clear to the country that the whole basis of compromise with the British was wrong and should be rejected *in toto*. To attempt a part of that compromise and reject the whole would have been the height of political opportunism.

As events developed, and the Muslim League walked out of the Constituent Assembly, it was clear that what remained of that body was no longer capable of drafting the constitution of free India. The only thing that remained to be done then was, as I have said above, to tear up the whole agreement with the British, to get out of the Interim Government and of the Constituent Assembly, and to call finally a real constituent assembly elected by the people. The assembly would then have become the centre of revolutionary power and challenged the British authority to a final showdown. The Socialist Party would have heartily cooperated with such an assembly and

taken full responsibility for enforcing its decisions.

We were told that such a course of action would have led to civil war, which the acceptance of Pakistan would avoid. We replied that in the first place the risk should be taken, and in the second place acceptance of Pakistan would not remove but accentuate that risk. Easily gained power however was too much of a temptation to be resisted, with what tragic results history has already shown. And yet there are people who boast of their victory and their wisdom and accuse others of talking hot air.

The Socialist party, as any other body, has made mistakes, but the stand it took on the deal with the British was surely not one of these. In fact, that was a stand of which the party may ever be proud.

A Grave Disease*

I am deeply thankful to the Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee for asking me to preside over this convention. I feel privileged to be associated with this vital movement for national unity by combating the divisive and reactionary forces of communalism, obscurantism and bigotry.

The present year and the last have been particularly bad in all three respects of communalism, obscurantism and bigotry-three faces of the same evil. There were in 1967 and 1968 many communal riots, burning alive of a Harijan, and, not the least, a case of human sacrifice. These incidents were a warning and a symptom: a symptom of a serious disease which afflicts the nation and a warning whose neglect will spell national disaster. The posters put up here eloquently proclaim this warning: communalism caused partition: communalism assassinated the Father of the Nation. Recent posters which appeared in the city bore witness to the fact that the assassin's spirit was still alive and abroad.

Like the two worlds of the rich and poor, we also have the world of the enlightened and emancipated elite, and the other of the educated and uneducated millions who are prisoners of prejudice, superstition and ignorance. But while one may understand that the rich will keep their distance from the poor, it is difficult to comprehend why the enlightened have abdicated from their clear duty and felt no commitment to the battle against the forces of darkness. One of the most deplorable features of the national scene is this failure of the elite to play their role in the renaissance of Indian enlightenment. The

*Presidential address published in report of the Second National Convention Against Communalism, December 28-29, 1968

result is that even the seats of high learning are being desecrated by communalism and bigotry.

Political Parties

All the political parties in India except a very few profess their faith in secularism. But while they have been fighting all the time for all kinds of real or imagined causes the cause of secularism, the foundation of this nation, has gone by default. It was, and is, the bounden duty of the secular political parties to launch a vigorous mass compaign of popular education in the meaning and practice of secularism. Not only have they failed to do so but some of them, by adopting a policy of accommodation towards the communal-minded parties just for a share in political power, have even helped spread communalism among the people.

The picture is no brighter when one turns to the trade union movement, which is so resonant with slogans of class solidarity and the rest. I personally witnessed the debacle of these high-sounding ideologies in the last riots in Jamshedpur. Therefore, unless the political parties appreciate the power of communalism and pluck up enough courage to fight it, they will either have to turn communal themselves or be buried under the weight of communal forces.

There is only one reason for the pusillanimity of the political parties. It is far easier to gather the votes of any community by exciting communal passions and ambitions, by highlighting communal issues, by inventing a communal bogey. Conversely, it is difficult to collect votes by rational appeal. It is for this reason that the forces of communalism, casteism, separatism, linguism, regionalism have been making long strides forward. Unless the secular political parties take courage and live up to their professions and make common cause against the forces of disruption and division the future is pretty dark.

In these circumstances, the work of such bodies as the

Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee of Delhi, the Secular Forum of Bombay, the Council for Communal Harmony of Calcutta are like burning torches in the night. May they each light a thousand other torches like themselves.

Several Varieties

Communities being of different kinds, communalism has many varieties. Of them, religious communalism is the most pernicious because it is clothed with divine sanction and is able to exploit deep religious sentiments. It is however not the fault of religion that it allows itself to be exploited by communalism. *The arch culprit here is politics, followed closely by economics. Communalism has never been known to serve any religious purpose: it always has a political, economic or social motivation.* No religion sanctions the loot, murder, rape, arson and worse that are the common features of all communal riots. But there is no doubt that every such riot adds to the popularity of one or another communal party or group, and strengthens the economic interests—in trade, manufacture, moneylending, etc.—of one religious community or another.

This does not mean that communalism has no roots in religion: *but it is false religion that nurses communalism within its bosom.* The analytical history of religions shows that the dross that got compounded with the gold of the original truth of the seer or the prophet was itself the product of political-economic-social exploitation of religion. This should be a warning to all those who have deep and genuine faith in their religion. Religion to me is a lifegiving source which relates me to the unknown force that is the ultimate reality. I draw inner strength from this relationship, howsoever vaguely I might comprehend it. What makes me a Hindu, which I am proud to be, is the fact that my understanding and intimation of the ultimate reality is determined basically by the guidance of the ancient Indian seers and spiritual teachers. Secondarily, my identity as a Hindu is determined by my

adherence to certain outward forms of religious worship enjoined by Hindu society in my area of the country. Others likewise might follow other prophets and other ways of worship. There is nothing in all this to breed hatred and violence and communal conflict.

Hindu Communalism

India being a country of many religions, almost every religious community has its own brand of communalism. They are all pernicious, but Hindu communalism is more pernicious than the others. One reason is that because the Hindus constitute a great majority of the population of India. Hindu communalism can easily masquerade as Indian nationalism and denounce all opposition to it as being antinational.

Some like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) might do it openly by identifying the Indian nation with Hindu Rashtra, others might do it more subtly. But in every case, such identification is pregnant with national disintegration, because members of the other communities can never accept the position of second-class citizens. Such a situation therefore has in it the seeds of perpetual conflict and ultimate disruption.

Those who attempt to equate India with Hindus and Indian history with Hindu history are only detracting from the greatness of India and the glory of Indian history and civilisation. Such persons, paradoxical though this may seem, are in reality the enemies of Hinduism itself and of the Hindus. Not only do they degrade the noble religion and destroy its catholicity and spirit of tolerance and harmony, but they also weaken and sunder the fabric of the nation, of which the Hindus form such a vast majority.

There is another sense in which the Hindu communalists are endangering the very community of which they claim to be the champions. Because of the divisions within Hindu society of unequal castes, and still more unequal out-castes, the spirit of communalism, once

aroused and yoked to the wagon of politics, will be bound to set up, as indeed it has begun to do already, one combination of castes against another combination, and a combination of the outcastes against them all.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

Regarding the RSS there are two remarks I wish to make. When the Sangh was under a shadow after Gandhiji's murder there were many protestation about its being entirely a cultural organisation. But apparently emboldened by the timidity of the secular forces it has thrown its veil away and has emerged as the real power behind, and controller of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The secular protestations of the Jana Sangh will never be taken seriously unless it cuts the bonds which tie it so firmly to the RSS machine. Nor can the RSS be treated as a cultural organisation so long as it remains the mentor and effective manipulator of a political party.

The other remark I wish to address to the RSS itself. If it has the good of India at heart it should convert itself from a narrowminded Hindu organisation to a broad-based Indian organisation and admit into its ranks the young from all communities and train them, as they are capable of doing, to be disciplined, loyal and united citizens of India. They would earn the gratitude of India if they did that, but if they persist in their present politics and happen to make headway they will most certainly kill the soul of Hindu Dharma and sap the foundations of the nation.

Muslim Communalism

I have time only for one more religious communalism, that of the Muslim community. Certain facts of Indian history and misinterpretations of Islam, coupled with reaction to Hindu communalism, have produced a type of Muslim communalism that is becoming a danger both to the Muslims themselves and to the country. There is one body that I would like to identify particularly as a

source of such danger; I mean the Jammat-e-Islami. But it is by no means the only body of its kind.

In the historical conditions of the times Islam in its early period became inextricably mixed up with the political institution of the state. In modern times this cannot be anything but an empty ritual, nor does the institutional frame for it exist any longer since the Ataturk abolished the caliphate. But the obscurantist minds of some Muslims cannot take in the facts of the modern world, and so we have this interesting dialogue between Chief Justice Munir of Pakistan and Maulana Moududi:*

Justice Munir: If we have an Islamic state in Pakistan, will you permit the Hindus to base their constitution on the basis of their own religion? Will you have any objection if the Muslims are treated in that form of government as Malishes or Shudras under the law of Manu?

M. Moududi: I should have no objection even if the Muslims of India were treated in that form of government as Shudras and Malishes and Manu's laws were applied to them, depriving them of all share in the government and the rights of a citizen.

Nothing but the most unenlightened orthodoxy could be responsible for such bigotry. The Jammat-e-Islami in India does not openly propagate this doctrine, but there is no doubt they consider the Indian state irreligious and one in which Muslims can live only an unhappy life, spiritual and material deprivations would be made up only by the community holding together in all spheres of life, including the political. According to one spokesman of this school, the journal *Margadeep:* "Every religious community should have a separate political organisation. Every issue should be decided by the leaders of respective communities by holding talks." (Editorial,

*Report of the court of enquiry constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to inquire into the Punjab disturbances of 1953, p. 228

25-12-1964).

It is interesting to find how communalists of all religions meet at one common point: every community must consolidate itself, must presume its separate identity, must have its own political party and so on. This is a terrifying picture of a nation divided within itself, or rather of a country made up of many separate nations. But no matter how terrifying the picture that is the destiny to which communalism is driving this country.

Proselytisation

A word about proselytisation. While every religion has the right to religious freedom I for one do not see any sense in proselytisation. Indeed this activity is pregnant with religious discord and even conflict. The improvement of human society does not seem to depend upon religious conversion but on the improvement of man. In every religion there are good men and bad, and if there is any religious problem involved here it is to ensure that every one is true to his own religion.

If we are all good Hindus, good Muslims, good Sikhs, good Christians, etc, this country would be a paradise on earth. Therefore I would appeal to all religious preachers to stop proselytising members of other religions and to concentrate on making the followers of their respective religions better men and women.

I have dealt with some aspects of communalism and have left out many other important aspects such as economic and cultural. I am sure they will be discussed by other participants at this convention. Before concluding I should like to emphasise that the struggle against communalism is fundamentally not a negative but a postive task. It is by educating the people in the meaning and practice of secularism, as I said at the beginning, that we shall succeed in laying the monster of communalism. Let this convention and the delegates gathered here from different parts of the country dedicate themselves to this noble cause.

AREAS OF TENSIONS

Bihar Tragedy*

I regret that being engaged elsewhere I was not in a position to know in time what was happening in Bihar. It was only when a wire reached me in Gwalior State that I learnt of the seriousness of the situation here, and returned immediately. I cannot say yet that I am in full possession of the facts, but it is clear from what I have been able to gather that terrible and gruesome things have happened in Bihar, to the eternal shame of the province and of the majority community here. The Hindus of Bihar have been guilty of heinous crimes and have committed deeds of abject cowardice and barbarity.

How a calamity of such proportions befell the province, it is difficult to say yet. But a few facts are beyond doubt. It is clear that the Noakhali tragedy had turned the entire province, particularly the rural areas, into a veritable ammunition dump. It is also clear that the ignition was supplied by various factors such as Hindu communalists, Muslim League provocateurs, and anti-Congress elements of every type. There are indications that big zamindars, whose vested interests are threatened, had a hand in the the disturbances, and also that British and communal elements in the services have fished freely in the troubled waters.

The situation happily seems to have been brought under control now, largely because of the whirlwind tours of Pandit Nehru and the military and other security measures taken by the provincial government. But peace established with the help of military force is no peace at all and cannot be permanent. Therefore normal peaceful conditions cannot be said to have returned to the province

*Press statement released on November 11, 1946

till the mass mind is cured of its frenzy and madness, and till neighbourliness and mutual goodwill return to both communities.

Politics of Hatred

In this connection I feel perfectly assured that the Congress organisation, which has always had a unique hold over the people of this province, will soon be able to reassert itself and master this civil calamity as it did the physical calamity of the last earthquake. But its task might be made difficult, even impossible, if the Muslim League does not return to the path of sanity and forsake the politics of hatred and falsehood and of deliberate and planned incitement to violence.

The events in Bengal and Bihar have proved the utter folly and futility of such politics, and have completely vindicated the stand and politics of the nationalist Muslims who have always held that the good of every community lies in the good of the country as a whole and that all communities have common objectives such as freedom and removal of poverty, illiteracy and disease, for the fulfilment of which all must work unitedly. It is high time therefore that the Muslim masses looked around for better and truer leadership.

I understand much resentment has been created in the Hindu mind by mischief-makers and anti-Congress agents on the issue of shooting of mobs by the military. Exaggerated reports of casualties have been circulated and anti-Congress feeling worked up. Where the army is called in to restore order rationing of force is always a difficult problem. But so far as I have been able to find out there has been no improper or excessive use made of the military.

Finally, I wish to warn the people of the province that we are not yet out of danger, and that Congressmen and other agencies working for peace must not relax or slow down their activities. I appeal particularly to young men and students to do all they can to restore peace in the

province and to bring the two communities together. I want everyone to remember that the present riots are a part of the British plan to impede and obstruct India's progress towards freedom. Whoever creates ill-will among the communities is an enemy of his country and wittingly or unwittingly an agent of British reaction.

Noakha..i and its After Effects*

I saw scenes of devastation and ruin but was glad to find that the situation was quiet everywhere. More tragic than material devastation is the devastation of the mind: therefore it should give us hope and encouragement when we find, as I did, that at least the mass mind is returning to sanity. Even the sufferers, among whom we should not forget the Hindus too, though their number is small, show signs of mental rehabilitation that should make the problem of physical rehabilitation vastly easier and simpler.

But there are agencies at work which are interested to serve political ends in delaying and thwarting the process of rehabilitation. It is agreed on all sides that the most crying need of the moment is for the Muslim refugees to go back to their villages and resume their normal course of life. Every attempt to this effect is being made, and Hindu villagers in nearly every case are willing and eager to welcome back their Muslim brethren and do all in their power to make good their loss and start them afresh on their road to life.

Venomous Propaganda

But everywhere Muslim League workers are sabotaging these efforts. There are instances of these workers actually taking refugees returning to their villages back to refugee camps. The Muslim League is interested in showing to the world that Hindus and Muslims cannot live together and therefore Pakistan is a necessity. To this end Muslim refugees migrate from Bihar to the

**Hindustan Times*, November 20, 1946

neighbouring districts of Bengal. The same end, the League workers are preventing the mental rehabilitation of Muslim sufferers through venomous propaganda.

The League knows well its responsibility for the sufferings of these simple Muslims, but it persists cynically in a form of politics which it again knows well can only cause further suffering to the victims of its propaganda. Let us not forget here and in Britain on whose support and guidance the League thrives and prospers.

All this makes the immediate task of rehabilitation of the devastated areas in Bihar very much more difficult and complicated. But the task has to be fulfilled if not only normal life is to return to the province but also if the country's march to freedom, which these British machinations are attempting to check, is to continue uninterrupted. I have no doubt that in spite of all attempts of the Muslim League to prolong the sufferings of innocent Muslims this task will soon be fulfilled and India's nationalism will emerge from this treacherous attack stronger and victorious.

Police Firing in Bihar*

I personally visited Nagar Nausa and discussed the situation with nonofficials and the military officer commanding the area. Fantastic reports have appeared in the press about the Nagar Nausa killing. In my estimate only 40 were killed in the area in rioting and when the military, taking a serious view of the situation, opened fire, fewer than 100 more were killed in this action. Some reports have been published of military excesses when restoring order, but it is difficult to say how far they are true.

My impression after touring of the areas is that the situation is definitely under control and mob frenzy is positively going down.

It is very difficult to give accurate figures of casualties, but the number killed by military action cannot be more than 200. After the immediate remedy is obtained by the use of force against all mischief-makers the next important task is bringing back the public mind to normal health by a sound campaign in its midst.

To me, the following are the causes of the communal riots in Bihar:

Firstly, there was the mass feeling aroused by the Noakhali tragedies. Secondly, criminal elements and anti-Congress organisations worked from behind. Thirdly, Muslims started some trouble here and there. Fourthly, and most important of all, the British element in the police and civil services had a hand in the whole thing, especially those who stood to suffer under the Congress Government for their activities in crushing the August 1942 rising.

*Extracts taken from the Annual Register, Vol II, July-December, 1946

I hold the view that a coalition government will be no solution to the present ills. Real coalition can only come about if there is understanding and a spirit of goodwill between the parties concerned. To demand coalition at the point of the dagger is to blackmail and can lead to no coalition.

Riots in Punjab*

I find it hard to express my feelings at the terrible happenings in Punjab. The tales of suffering and brutality I have heard and the scenes of havoc and devastation I have witnessed have overwhelmed me with horror and disgust. That man could be capable of such cruelty and bestiality I could not have found possible to believe but for the compelling evidence of facts.

All communities have suffered, the minorities in the western districts of the province being the worst sufferers. Men of all communities have vied with one another in the race of communal fury. Yet in this desert of inhumanity and barbarity there are cases too of humanity and brotherhood, and here too all communities have vied for pride of place. It is these rare instances of fellowship and mutual help that point to a ray of hope in the prevailing darkness.

British Conspiracy

The development of recent events in Punjab clearly indicate that the present disturbances were carefully planned and are part of a conspiracy to instal the Muslim League in office as a step towards the final creation of Pakistan. Among other participants in this conspiracy are assuredly Governor Jenkins and his British colleagues in the province.

It cannot be an accident that the districts where serious rioting has broken out are precisely those districts ruled by British officers. It cannot be an accident too that when people in distress go to these officers, who are paid

*March 22, 1947

by the province to do their duty, they are made fun of and taunted and told to go to the Congress as these gentlemen were quitting anyway. It cannot be an accident too that the police, who in spite of the influence of communalism are essentially and effectively under the control of the British rulers of the province, have openly abetted the rioting.

Whatever else may or may not be necessary for the peace of Punjab, I have no doubt in my mind that it is absolutely essential to pack off to England immediately Governor Jenkins and all his British colleagues in the province. The events of Punjab have once again brought home to me that if there is to be peaceful settlement of the Indian question the British must quit here and now. Whatever be the attitude of the British Government it is clear that the tin gods of the British bureaucracy find it hard to shed their imperialism. The longer these people remain the more mischief they will do.

Coming to ourselves in Punjab, it seems we have not yet realised that we now face realities and must settle our affairs among ourselves instead of running every time to a third party. The Congress has already invited the Muslim League to a discussion. The League must respond if it wants a peaceful settlement.

Plan for Civil War

The question which underlies the Punjab disturbances is whether the League wants to follow the path of negotiation and settlement or the path of intimidation and violence. Recent League propaganda in Punjab shows that it is determined to use force to secure its aims. If that is so there can be no settlement short of a civil war. The League must face this question squarely now and say if it is preparing for civil war. If it is not it must change the tenor of its propaganda and sit round a table determined to find a solution.

If after discussion no peaceful solution is found and India has to be divided, and divided peacefully, the

division must be based on the consent of the people concerned, i.e., on the basic principle of self-determination—every territory being free to choose the political centre with which it should affiliate. This would inevitably mean the division of Punjab and Bengal.

If the League does not agree to this it can mean nothing else except that it wants to coerce territories against their will to accept Pakistan. This cannot lead to anything but civil war. That is the clear issue, and it is for the League to make up its mind.

In conclusion I should like to say that there is danger at this moment that even sensible people in Punjab should lose their head and that nationalism may be submerged by communalism. Already dangerous steps have been taken, and unless opposition to Pakistan is freed from communal feelings and interests and the provincial Congress dissociates itself from them there may be a political setback which will reduce the work of half a century to naught. On the socialists of the province particularly lies a heavy burden and, isolated though they may find themselves and threatened on all sides by the cohorts of communalism, they must stand firm and keep the flag of freedom flying. I am sure in time the youth and the poor will rally round their flag—the flag of *Kisan Mazdoor raj* as distinct from the flag of Muslim, Hindu or Sikh raj.

Foreign Power Behind Communal Riots*

The present disturbances in Punjab were carefully planned and were part of a conspiracy to instal the Muslim League in office as a step towards the final establishment of Pakistan.

Among other participants in this conspiracy are assuredly Governor Jenkins and his British colleagues in the province.

It cannot be an accident that the districts where serious rioting broke out are precisely those districts which are ruled by British officers. It cannot be an accident too that when people in distress go to these officers, who are paid by the province to do their duty, they are made fun of and taunted and told to go to the Congress as these gentlemen were quitting anyway.

It cannot be an accident too that the police, who in spite of the influence of communalism are essentially and effectively under the control of the British rulers of the province, have openly aided and abetted the rioting. Whatever else may or may not be necessary for the peace of Punjab, I have no doubt in my mind that it is absolutely essential to pack off to England immediately Governor Jenkins and all his British colleagues in the province.

Poser to League

The question that underlies the Punjab disturbances is whether the League wants to follow the path of negotiation and settlement or the path of intimidation and

**National Herald,* March 23, 1947

violence. Recent League propaganda in Punjab shows that it is determined to use force to secure its aims. If that is so there can be no settlement short of a civil war.

The League must face this question squarely now and say if it is preparing for civil war. If it is not it must change the tenor of its propaganda and sit round a table determined to find a solution. If after discussion no peaceful solution is found and if India has to be divided, and divided peacefully, the division must be based on the consent of the people concerned.

Protection of Minorities : An Essential Requisite*

A conflict between two principles, nationalism, secularism and democracy on one hand and theocracy and denial of equality on the other, was the basis of Indo-Pakistan relations. It might sound academic at a moment like this to raise such theoretical issues, but I am sure that all actions must be based on theory, and therefore if we really desire to solve this problem we must be first sure in our own minds which principle we accept.

I have not the least doubt in my mind that India as a whole has accepted the first principle. Ours is a secular state. There are of course lapses and the minorities are not always happy, as for instance in Calcutta. But I have no doubt that a sincere effort is being made to build a secular way of life.

If that is so the first conclusion I should like to draw from the analysis of the present situation is that whatever may happen in Pakistan the minorities in India must live without fear.

It is up to us, particularly the majority community, to assure the Muslims of India absolute equality as citizens of this country. If we did that I am sure our case against Pakistan would be strengthened a hundredfold. And if we were driven to take the most drastic action possible against Pakistan we would have world opinion on our side.

If on the other hand the Hindu minorities were ill-treated in Pakistan and the Muslim minorities were ill-treated in India—there may be a difference in degree—there would be no solution except the solution of murder till we get tired or till one of the parties is exterminated.

*Press statement published in *Hitavada,* March 8, 1950

That is hardly a solution, and no reasonable man would call it such. Unfortunately small incidents have occurred in some parts of the country. I hope the citizens of free India will realise their new responsibilities and assist the government, whatever their differences may be, in maintaining peace and communal harmony.

Basis of Partition

That is only the beginning of a solution. There is no guarantee that in Pakistan events will not occur which will disturb the minds of people here, because Pakistan is based on the other set of principles. It seems likely that neither the government nor people there really want to treat their minorities on the basis of equality. Pakistan has refused to call itself a secular state. It calls itself an Islamic state, which presupposes that all those who do not belong to the Islamic faith do not enjoy equal rights. Merely because the majority of its population claims a certain faith no state can call itself a Muslim state. There have been states with 100 percent Christian populations, but they call themselves secular. I therefore think that the conflict of principles is the root of all the difficulty. It seems to me that a theocratic state and a secular state will live side by side with great difficulty.

But we must keep our house in order. It is then for us to demand from Pakistan to set its house in order and to extend to its minorities the treatment given to the minorities in India. If Pakistan does not act accordingly, we cannot sit quiet and look on because it is not human. If governments do not act people do. That is how human feelings run.

International Intervention

If Pandit Nehru's suggestion to Liaquat Ali Khan to tour the affected areas had been accepted there would have been a psychological change on both sides. I should like Pandit Nehru to make similar attempts. India's case must

be placed before the world. I should like India's neighbours to be told exactly what our viewpoint is, what our ways, our measures and methods of solution are. If India fails in all these methods, then we should be able to tell the world that there seems to be no solution.

It would be better then to tell Pakistan that if it is not able to protect its minorities something could be done by an international force. If Pakistan does not agree there is no solution possible except to say that the limit has been reached and the only way is to send a force to East Bengal to protect the minorities there.

If Pakistan interprets this as war it cannot be helped. We would have to wage it then on all fronts. If there is intervention we would welcome it provided it is not of the type we have seen in Indonesia.

Need for a National Policy*

Our nation is in great peril, but not all of us seem to realise this. If ever there was time for dispassionate thinking and united action it is now. But there seems to be nothing but controversy and political exploitation of the nation's calamity. Let those who are talking loosely of ministerial resignations and change of government realise that if India has to face the present menace with success there must be national unity and joint effort of all patriotic citizens and parties.

I therefore feel that in order that we may cease talking in different voices and may evolve a common policy of action Pandit Nehru should immediately call a conference of representative Indians. Had Parliament been representative of the people, such a conference would have been unnecessary. But as things are national policy could only be evolved at a conference of this nature.

Meanwhile, let me emphasise that whatever national policy might eventually be formulated, it is inconceivable that there should be any sane Indian who believes that disturbance of peace and reprisals against the Indian Muslims can ever solve the problem. Therefore in every event it is the duty of men of all parties to unite in preserving the peace of this country and guaranteeing to our Muslim citizens not only freedom from fear but also an equal and honourable status with other citizens of the country. Unfortunately the incidents that have happened in India, particularly in West Bengal, in the last few days have weakened the hands of those who wanted firm action to be taken with regard to Pakistan. We cannot rush to other lands to protect human rights and decencies when we fail to protect them at home.

*Press statement published on March 23, 1950

Delhi Agreement and After*

For a brief space of most recent history I rose to dizzy heights of popularity in West Bengal. I must confess it was a rather pleasant experience, for who does not relish the acclaim of the crowd? Now again I have dropped down to the usual pedestrian level that has always been mine in this province.

Incidentally this personal history has shown how cheap the price of popularity is. A mere statement can make one the darling of the people, and a mere statement again can make the same people jeer and boo. Unfortunately it is not popularity that I have ever sought in politics but the right path to serve my country and my people. History shows that popular clamour has not always coincided with national interest, and that nation-builders had often to discipline mass frenzy and sometimes even face martyrdom in the process. Mahatma Gandhi is the most illustrious example in all history. Let me not be misunderstood: I am not placing myself in the ranks of nation-builders. I am but a humble servant of the nation. My purpose in drawing attention to history is merely to correct the perspective.

Let me, in view of this psychopathic climate, state at the outset my position with regard to Nehru. It was 20 years ago, early in 1930, soon after my return from the United States, that I started my political career under Nehru in the office of AICC as secretary of the Labour Department. Nehru was president of the Indian National Congress. Since that time I have held Nehru in high regard and affection and have learnt a good deal from him.

It has always been a source of happiness to me that,

*Statement by Jayaprakash Narayan published on May 1950

as in the case of Gandhiji, whether in agreement or opposition I have always had Nehru's confidence and affection. Unfortunately for some years now it has been my misfortune to find myself more often than not in disagreement with him on major issues.

Soon after the August Revolution, it may be recalled, that when AICC assembled at Bombay, Nehru moved that the committee accept the Pethick Lawrence plan of independence for India. I, on behalf of the Socialist Party, opposed him and asked for total rejection of the plan. Because of that policy of total rejection and in spite of pressure we kept out of the Constituent Assembly, which was but a part of that plan.

Foundation of a Socialist India

When the Nehru Government was formed our divergence with his government's policy ultimately compelled us to leave the Congress and form an independent Socialist Party. Our main difference with him today is that whereas we would like here and now to lay the foundation of a socialist India, Nehru has put socialism on the shelf and his Government is proceeding to reconstruct the economic and political structure of this country on the existing basis of private enterprise.

Had I been inclined, as I am pointed, to suspend my independent judgement in favour of Nehru's persuasion I would have been today not in the ranks of the opposition but elsewhere. Opposition has however never meant to me abuse and ranting or exploitation of a national calamity to party advantage. Nevertheless, those who are accustomed to ranting and who raise amoralism to a basic theorem of politics will not appreciate the decencies of public life.

Fallacious Basis

Let me—now that the heat of controversy has abated somewhat—state the position of the Socialist Party in

regard to this difficult problem in the hope that cooler minds will find reason more acceptable. Incidentally I shall also examine the alleged shifts in our policy.

Pakistan owed its birth to a falacious principle and a vicious practice. The principle was that religion alone constituted the basis of nationality. According to this principle, it was contended for instance that the Bengali Muslim and the Frontier Pathan were members of one nation while the Bengali Hindu and the Bengali Muslim, belonging to the same ethnic group, speaking the same language, sharing the same culture and living in the same village, belonged to two separate nations!

The principle was so fantastic that even imperialist machinations would have failed to establish it had not ugly and vicious facts been produced to support it. These facts were the riots. Whether Hindu killed Muslim or Muslim killed Hindu, whether it was the great Calcutta killing or Noakhali, Bihar or Garhmukteshwar, the result was the same demonstration of the fact that Hindus and Muslims could not live together because they were two separate nations.

Principle and practice combined to partition the country. But partition solved nothing. While the two-nation theory brought into being two separate states, the two separate "nations" still faced each other on either side of the border. The prime question then was: would these separate "nations" live together in amity and be welded into a common nationality? The question was the same as had faced undivided India; and if the answer was found to be affirmative partition and all the attendant bitterness and hostility would have been unnecessary. The two nations might as well have lived together in undivided India.

Contradictory Position

The two countries started to answer the historic question in two different settings. When the Congress accepted partition it did not accept the two-nation theory. It still believed in a common Indian nationality and explained the

acceptance of partition as a choice of lesser of the two evils, the greater being continuous communal strife. Thus with the exception of a small section of Hindu communal opinion India started with a firm faith in a common nationhood. The party which came to power was a noncommunal body. The organic law of the nation laid down clearly that the Indian state would be secular and democratic. The task of welding Mr Jinnah's two nations was thus not too difficult in India. The Indian Muslims fed on Mr Jinnah's theory might have found it rather difficult at the beginning to adjust themselves to the prospect of common nationhood. But the theory being artificial, their adjustment could not have been difficult.

The situation was different on the other side. Pakistan was born out of the two-nation theory. The advocates of that theory were themselves in power, and the ruling party; the Muslim League, was a frankly communal party. The objectives resolution of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly prescribed an Islamic basis for the state which was to be built there. It may be remarked parenthetically that Mr Liaquat Ali Khan's recent reference to Ramrajya in this connection was irrelevant, because while there is a considerable loose talk in this country about Ramrajya it finds no mention in the constitution or in any documents connected with it.

In view of this setting in Pakistan the emergence there of a common nation of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs was, to say the least, problematical.

Then followed the Punjab and Sind tragedies. It appeared that the two-nation theory was still at work and Pakistan was determined to squeeze out the minorities. Whatever might have been the real intentions of Pakistan the facts seemed to fit that assumption.

Then came Bengal. It appeared again that the squeezing out process was still at work.

"What is the solution to this awful problem?" was the anguished question that millions asked. In the opinion of the Socialist Party there are only two solutions and no third.

One solution is to accept the full implications of the two-nation theory. That would mean the expulsion of all Hindus from Pakistan and of all Muslims from India. I understand that exchange of the Hindu and Muslim populations of East and West Bengal was the solution suggested by Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. Some others too have made that suggestion. But it is not realised that such an exchange of populations can ever stop with East and West Bengal. The logic of the situation would drive us to its inexorable end.

This solution is wholly repugnant to me, as it must be to all who believe in the principles of human civilisation. To be forced to accept the principle that two human beings cannot live together just because their religions are different is to go back to the dark ages and to deny everything that one stands for.

The practical aspects of this solution are no less repugnant. People cannot be forced out of their homes except by force. Application of force on such a mass scale cannot but brutalise the whole people and reduce life in this country to the most brutish level. Further, such gigantic migrations must disorganise the country's economy and put a strain on the state that must prove unbearble. Again, exchange of a crore of Hindus for four crores of Muslims must set in train a new conflict because Pakistan would feel justified in demanding new territory to settle its excess population. The remedy would thus have created a new disease.

Acceptance of this solution would also mean the victory of Hindu communalism and ascendency of the Hindu Rashtra mentality. That would inevitably stimulate separation further; and then the separatist mentality might not be restricted to religious communities but might spread to racial, linguistic and even caste groups. That would be the end of India.

Thus, considered from every point of view, the idea of exchange of populations must be given up.

Secular State Only Solution

That leaves only one possible solution, namely that both India and Pakistan be secular states and the minorities in both have full security and equal citizenship.

It was in the light of this basic analysis that the Socialist Party executive had enunciated at Rewa its policy on East Bengal. Since it still remains our policy let me bring out the main points, which were three. First, India must hold fast to its secular character, and no matter what happens in Pakistan must give full protection and security to its Muslim citizens and guarantee them equal rights of citizenship.

Second, India should, by friendly approaches to Pakistan, try to persuade that country "to join hands to guarantee in words and deeds full protection and opportunity for development of all minorities." The executive went on to say: "In this connection the Prime Minister's suggestion for a joint inquiry commission and a joint tour with Mr Liaquat Ali was a commendable beginning. The suggestion bore no fruit. But *further attempts* should be made and the idea of a joint tour and inquiry should be expanded to wider joint action."

The last point provided a way out if these efforts failed. To quote the executive again: "If the earnest attempts of our government do not succeed and the people and Government of Pakistan persist in their present policy, India must finally, and sooner rather than later, *act on her own and take every measure to* protect the minorities and human rights in Pakistan."

I still stand four square by this policy and hold that there is no alternative. Where then is my famous somersault? In the imagination of my critics, who do not take the trouble to understand but are ever ready to misjudge.

Nagpur Statement

A few days after the Socialist Party executive issued its statement I addressed the Nagpur Institute of Journalists

and elucidated the party viewpoint. Asked to explain the words "take every measure to protect the minorities and human rights in Pakistan, "I told the students of the institute that "every measure" included as a last resort sending our forces into Pakistan to protect the minorities.

The next morning newspapers headlined my statement: "Jayaprakash demands armed intervention." My stock soared high in West Bengal. And Mr M.N. Roy denounced my "warmongering" and Khwaja Ahmed Abbas my "sabre-rattling." Attempt was even made to show that there was a rift in the Socialist Party on this issue and Mr Asoka Mehta's fine efforts to contact the Pakistan trade union leaders were represented as being in contradiction to my views. I wish both critics and friends had tried to understand.

While it is true that I had suggested what is known in international law as "measures short of war" it was not right to overlook the qualifying conditions and fasten attention only on the final step. Let me remind the reader of the conditions I had set forth. First, I had emphasised that there must be peace and order in India, and our Muslim citizens must live without fear and enjoy equal rights with Hindus. As I had said in a later statement, we cannot rush to protect minorities and human rights elsewhere when we fail to do so at home.

Second, I had insisted at Nagpur that though Nehru's friendly approaches had proved infructuous, fresh attempts should be made to reach a peaceful solution. This is how my "warmongering" statement was summed up by the Nagpur *Hitavada,* in whose office incidentally the Institute of Journalists had met: "A plea for exploring all possible avenues of peaceful settlement of Indo-Pakistan relations arising out of the situation in East Bengal was made by Mr Jayaprakash Narayan at the Nagpur Institute of Journalists this evening."

It will thus be seen that it was only in the event of all peaceful efforts failing, and when we had succeeded in keeping peace at home and doing justice to our own minorities, that I had suggested what was described as

armed intervention.

After that it was not I who changed but the objective situation. The communal position rapidly deteriorated in West Bengal and incidents took place on a large scale, the dimensions of which have not yet been made known to the people of this country. Pandit Nehru had spoken of an iron curtain in Pakistan, but I found a steel curtain in Calcutta itself, where practically nothing of what was happening next door in Howrah or Hooghly found the light of publicity.

To say, as has been said *ad nauseam,* that the people acted when the government failed to act does not unfortunately alter the terrible facts. In view of these facts to have persisted in the demand for police action would have been perverse and without any moral justification what so ever. I shall concede that there was perhaps a full week in which the Government of India would have been justified to act. But perhaps the hopes of a peaceful settlement prevented Nehru from taking a step which was not only fraught with grave danger but was sure to cause greater suffering and hardship to the whole people.

Nehru's Hope

As it turned out Nehru's hope was justified and a peaceful settlement was arrived at. To oppose that settlement or to sabotage it is to play with fire, for as Nehru has said the alternative is war. War is a frightful affair, and no sane person would rush into it when other avenues of settlement are open. Nor would war necessarily save the Hindus of East Bengal nor help rehabilitate the refugees.

There is a great deal of talk about the honesty of purpose of Pakistan. "Will they implement the agreement?" we are asked on all sides. It occurs to no one to ask whether *we* will implement it. Judging from the temper of the people of West Bengal and the attitude of its press, one may well ask that question. Let us remember that if we implemented the agreement and Pakistan did not, a solution—though a tragic solution—would yet be

available. But if both fail to do so no solution can ever be found. A war fought in a communal climate on both sides could only result in mutual destruction. It would be quite a different affair however if an India which had upheld the principles of civilisation and respected human rights used force for the enforcement of those very rights and principles. The result of such force cannot but be the defeat of the force of evil and reaction.

A Word to Critics

Let me say a word to those who accused me of sabre-rattling. A socialist, I have always been an enemy of communalism. I was a bitter opponent of the League and its two-nation theory and of partition. I was also, and am, an opponent of Hindu, Sikh and all other communalism. When Gandhiji was assassinated. it was common talk in certain circles in Delhi that Nehru was second on the list and my turn came next. I have not changed since then.

Let me remind my critics of what Gandhiji said at the time of the Punjab riots. When the gigantic forced migrations began Gandhiji firmly set his face against them. He declared solemnly that he would never accept the migrations as final and would never bow his head before the principle that human beings could not live together just because they professed different faiths. He said that conditions must be created in India so that every Muslim who had fled for his life might return to his home and live here in peace and with honour. And he said further that in Pakistan too similar conditions must be created so that every Hindu and Sikh could go back to live in honour and happiness. And then he made a very startling statement. He said that if we succeeded in creating such conditions in India and Pakistan failed he would be prepared to fight with Pakistan on that issue. Let it be remembered that it was in trying to create those conditions in India that he was martyred.

Protection of Minorities

My proposal was no different in principle from what Gandhiji said. There is no doubt of course that the Mahatma was sure that if he succeeded in creating the conditions for which he was working, the moral force of his success would have conquered Pakistan and the fight of which he talked would have been unnecessary. Lesser men like me might nurse the same hope.

In any event let it be remembered that there was no room for *force majeure* in my proposal if we failed to create the conditions for the Muslims of India that we were demanding for the Hindus of Pakistan. But if we did do that and Pakistan did not, and withal rejected all peaceful methods of settlement, then I did expect all Muslims in India, including Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, to join hands with other Indians in compelling Pakistan to do its duty to its citizens. If that was sabre-rattling then words have ceased to have meaning.

Other Suggestions

Let me before I conclude examine certain other solutions that have been suggested. One suggestion, fashionable in leftist circles in West Bengal, is the creation of an "independent, united Bengal." If finding a solution for a serious practical problem merely means wishful thinking, this might be considered a "solution."

But there is absolutely no chance to my mind of either India or Pakistan agreeing to a second dismemberment. And wihout the agreement of both, independent united Bengal must remain on paper. Further, it is not clear to me how, when the communal division of the country has failed to bring peace, linguistic division would succeed. Let it not be forgotten that the East and West Bengal question is not the only source of conflict between India and Pakistan.

Another solution, also emanating from left circles, is that of two autonomous provinces of East and West

Bengal—one Hindu and the other Muslim—and both in the Indian Republic. As in the previous case, it is not clear how East Bengal would be detached from Pakistan, nor why, when it *was* detached, it must remain separate from the rest of Bengal. One would have thought that the linguistic, cultural and economic pulls were so great that the two Bengals would inevitably come together once the artificial partition was undone.

Lastly a few words about Akhand Bharat. There is a great deal of talk about the reunion of India and Pakistan in Hindu communal circles. It is however tragic that these circles do not realise that by the actions they are doing everything possible to defeat their purpose. Communalism, both Muslim and Hindu, was responsible for dividing the country. Communalism now can only further divide and alienate. If the Hindu communalist is dreaming, as he well might be, of reuniting the broken pieces by a war of conquest he is living in a fool's paradise.

Ten crores of Muslims of Pakistan and India could never be forced to become citizens of India by the sword. Even if the world allowed the battle to be fought and India were victorious, its victory would become its defeat, for it would have a hundred million rebels on its hands, backed by millions outside. It would be a task beyond the power of any nation to keep a hundred million people under subjugation. And why should India want to subjugate anyone? Did we win our freedom from subjugation only to subjugate others? If I understand my countrymen, their overwhelming answer surely would be no.

Asian World

Strange as it might appear, I too dream of a reunited India. I dream of it because I am a socialist. I dream of it because I have faith in the toiling peoples of the earth. I dream of it because I dream of an Asian federation and ultimately of a world government. But a world government is a far cry from Hindu imperialism!

Cow-Slaughter*

The curtain has not yet lifted from the tragic events at Sitamarhi. Particularly the origin of the sudden flare-up of violence on Ramnaumi day in Sitamarhi town seems to be still shrouded in mystery. What is so far known of the story is a very sad commentary on the Hindu mass mind.

I do not think that Hinduism has ever thought that the life of any animal, no matter how sacred, is more sacred than human life. All life is sacred, but the most sacred of all is human life.

For us in India there is no doubt that the cow is the most valuable of all animals. Even in this age of science she remains, and will remain, the pivot of our agricultural economy. I say "will remain" advisedly because of our land-man ratio. our rate of population growth, and even the most optimistic rate of urbanisation. But no matter how valuable the cow may be for human life it is an utter confusion of values to put the value of a cow's life above that of a human being.

The Hindu concept that a cow's life is inviolate is the outcome not of any primitive taboo, because beef was a common food of Hindu society at one time, but of the gradual moral and spiritual development of the Indian people in which non-Vedic Hindu religions such as Jainism and Buddhism perhaps took the lead. In course of time respect for human life grew and nonviolence came to be more and more emphasised in human relations.

Asoka's adjuration of war as state policy was the most striking example of this spiritual growth. Gradually the oneness of all life came to be realised, and many extended the *dharma* of nonkilling to all living things. But even

*Press statement, April 27, 1959

those who could not rise to that high level—and they were perhaps, as they still are, the majority—decided as a token of their reverence for life as such to desist from killing their most useful animal, the cow. There was no blind superstition in that but rational self-denial in order to bear witness to the oneness of life. The sacredness of the cow symbolised the sacredness of life itself.

Dangerous Superstition

In these days of degeneration and decay of Hinduism, the sacredness of the cow has however become a meaningless and therefore dangerous superstition which sometimes leads misguided Hindus to the wilful and wanton destruction of the most valuable and sacred form of life on this earth, namely human life. If we Hindus understood the true meaning of the sacredness of the cow we would learn to be compassionate towards every living thing, but more so towards man.

The Sitamarhi flare-up points to the need for many things such as better organisation of the forces of non-violence, but it highlights more than anything else the need for the Hindu religion to purge itself of the dross and salvage the gold that is hidden beneath the heavy load of impurities.

National reconstruction is not only a political or economic affair. Its mainsprings are religious and spiritual reconstruction. This requires courage and the spirit of spiritual adventure which India witnessed in the age of the Upanishads and in that of Buddha and Mahavir. Only the future can tell whether Hinduism, in spite of its great age, has the vitality for the great creative role that it has been called upon to play by history.

Peaceful Settlement

The next point that the Sitamarhi incidents highlighted was that no matter what our religious susceptibilities we must learn to behave as civilised human beings and to

settle our disputes peacefully. In other words the forces and habits of nonviolence must be cultivated and strengthened. The task has two aspects, inculcation of nonviolence among the people and rooting out of the causes of violence in economic, political and social life; and dealing with outbreaks of violence in a nonviolent manner. The first task may be summed up as building up Sarvodaya, a non-violent society, which Vinobaji's movement is trying to accomplish. The second task again is being tackled by Vinobaji's programme for a Shanti Sena.

At present whenever there is violence the forces of superior violence, represented by the police and the army, are called up to quell disturbances. No one can object to this, because at present there is no alternative. But it should be understood that when superior violence subdues weaker violence this is no victory for peace but a victory for violence, which is the negation of peace. We have to learn how to enforce peace with the forces of peace. Then only can we speak of having established peace.

It is to achieve this noble task that Vinobaji has revived Gandhiji's idea of a Shanti Sena and is trying to put it into practice.

The public would have noticed that in Bihar at least the Sitamarhi riots were the first occasion when the Shanti Sena went into action under the leadership of a veteran Gandhian of this state, Shri Baidyanath Chaudhary, who was ably assisted by Shri Dwarako Sundarani of Vinobaji's Samanwaya Ashram at Bodh Gaya. Soon other Shantisainiks and Bhoodan and Khadi Gramodyog Sangh workers rushed to the area.

Shantisainiks

In the days before Swaraj Congress workers used to function as Shantisainiks on all such occasion. But after Swaraj the state "forces of law and order" have been almost the sole agencies working to maintain peace. Vinobaji's Shanti Sena has added a new factor, the moral and social possibilities of which are unlimited.

The experience gathered by the Shantisainiks in Sitamarhi and Bairgania will help us plan and develop our future work.

Before I conclude, may I say a word to the authorities. Their natural inclination would be to seek out the wrongdoers and punish them. While I grant that the requirements of the law must be fulfilled let it not be forgotten that the real culprit is superstition and communal ill-will on both sides. If this is true, as I am sure it is, legal reprisals and punishments are poor remedies. The true remedy is education and enlightenment and the promotion of mutual trust and cooperation. This is not a task that the police and magistracy can accomplish. This is the job of public-spirited and enlightened citizens, including workers of political parties, but above all of Gandhian constructive or Sarvodaya workers. The most authority can do is to see that vindictiveness does not vitiate justice and there is no delay, favouritism nor corruption in the distribution of relief. The rest is the work of men of goodwill of all communities, persuasions and organisations.

Jabalpur Incidents*

Every sensible Indian must have been deeply grieved by the Jabalpur incidents. How thin our veneer of humanity and how weak our feelings of national unity are, could find no better witness than the wicked deeds committed there.

And, as if not to be left behind by Indians in inhumanity and wickedness, Pakistanis went berserk in Karachi. The authorities too of that city seemed to have entered the competition, for if their opposite numbers in Jabalpur were slack those in Karachi went one better and let goondaism have free play right under their nose. I hope however that sensible persons in Pakistan too are deeply grieved by the Karachi incidents.

This is not a time to lose one's head and allow passions to gain the upper hand. The unperturbed sanity and deep humanity of the Prime Minister and his far vision illumine the path for us through this darkness.

Neither the Jabalpur nor the Karachi incidents should lead any sane person in either country to doubt that Hindus and Muslims must live as brothers and equal citizens in their respective countries, and further that India and Pakistan should not only live as friendly and equal nations but also move closer and be bound by ties which history, geography, economy and common interests dictate. The sectarian and antinational elements in both countries must be exposed and isolated so that their power for mischief is curbed. I am sure there is enough goodness and wisdom in both countries to conquer the forces of evil and self-destruction which have raised their heads.

*Statement to Press Trust of India

Two-Nation Theory*

The recent and recurring outbursts of sudden and cruel violence against Muslim citizens of this country as retaliatory punishment for the acts of Muslim citizens of Pakistan are a matter of the gravest anxiety for every thinking Indian.

If Indian Hindus kill Indian Muslims for no other reason than that Pakistani Muslims have killed Pakistani Hindus it is (among other things) a complete vindication of the two-nation theory. It simply means that we affirm in action what we loudly repudiate in words. It should be clear that such a split state of mind can have only one result: gradual undermining of the very basis of our nation.

Sometimes the current incidents are excused in the name of Hinduism. A Hindu who is proud of his religion, I cannot think of a greater blasphemy than to clothe these crimes which degrade man with the sanction of *dharma*. Whatever *dharma* is left in the present atmosphere of creeping materialism, benumbed ethical sensibility, pseudo-science and undigested vulgar modernism would surely bleed to death if brother continues to knife brother only because he worships God differently.

The future of the human race lies in unity. Both science and the spirit of man point in that direction. Everything that stands in the way—nation, race, even religion (if it is divisive, which true religion cannot be)—will have to go. India, with its great tradition of universalism and humanism, was expected to play a significant role in this process of history. But these recent events, portents as they are, threaten to strangle that precious

*Press Statement, March 1964

plant of our culture which produced even in the days of decline such beautiful blossoms as Tagore and Gandhi.

So let our misguided countrymen understand that by their insensate action they are at once denying nation, god and man.

To create such understanding is a process of basic human education which must be undertaken with all seriousness. Only then can the present chain reaction be broken. Meanwhile efforts should also be made to remove the more urgent causes of the malady. I feel certain that moral and mental health will not return to the people of India and Pakistan unless the two countries understand that in their own interest, if not for higher aims, they must settle their differences.

It would appear to be unrealistic and utopian even to express such thoughts at the present moment of mutual hate and killing. But if either side makes a genuine effort I am convinced that the other would feel compelled to respond. An Indian, I naturally feel that whatever be the present attitude of Pakistan my country must make the effort. So far the efforts made by either side have not been risen above the level of politics. But the problem facing us is at heart a human and not a political problem. It is only when we lift such efforts also to that level that the present darkness will begin to clear.

Great Error*

It was during my peace work in Jamshedpur that I read of the Lok Sabha unanimously recommending that the government enlist world opinion against the atrocities perpetrated on the minorities in East Pakistan. It is but right that members of Parliament should be greatly concerned at the fate of minorities in a neighbouring country. But was it not equally right, if not more so, to have shown concern about the fate of the Muslim minority in our country? I spent four days in all in Jamshedpur immediately after the terrible events there (about 140 Shantisainiks are still working in the city and the mofussil areas).

I met all sections of the people in Jamshedpur: leaders of political parties and trade unions, directors and managers of industrial concerns, high and low officials of the Bihar Government, representative citizens and sufferers. I visited all the affected areas in the city but did not have the stomach to visit more than two of the 17 Muslim refugee camps. (A member of the Lok Sabha reported to have broken down while speaking about the atrocities committed in East Pakistan but I doubt if any sensitive person could have stood the sights and stories of atrocities the Muslim refugee camps in Jamshedpur—the same may also be said of Rourkela—presented.)

I also carefully collected reports from various sources about happenings in the rural areas and mining and small industrial township in Singbhum district. It has not yet been possible to get accurate reports from Simdega and other adjoining rural areas of Ranchi district, but I heard reports from Shri Nabakrushna Chaudhuri, (former Chief

*Letter to the Speaker, Lok Sabha, dated April 9, 1964

Minister, Orissa) Malati Devi (his wife) and Shri Manmohan Chaudhuri, president of the Sarva Seva Sangh.

I am not writing this in order to report to you on the conditions in these areas of Bihar and Orissa and in the vital steel cities. But I do most earnestly wish to say that India and Indians have no cause to feel smug and complacent or superior and holy. Terrible things have happened, and on a scale that has not been realised by Delhi or the country at large.

The tale of provocation caused by refugee trains is only a small part of the full story. There is no doubt in my mind that there was an organisation behind these dastardly activities which operated from a common centre, manufactured and spread rumours, planned and financed specific actions, provided the whole operation with a political and philosophical justification.

It is interesting to note that all the political parties (chiefly three operate in the area: the Congress, PSP and CPI) and the trade unions were rendered completely impotant in the face of the upsurge of organised criminality. It also proved that education, including science and engineering education, was no guarantee against animality and criminality. It further proved how the forces of law and order were themselves infected considerably with the virus of communalism.

In one major industrial establishment at least the supervisory staff remained inactive, to put it at its best, while lethal weapons were fabricated for hours in the factory itself out of iron bars and similar material. As for the nature of atrocities committed I do not think any holds were barred. Every kind of revolting deed was done. Seen in the mass, the tragedy was terrible enough, but some individual instances were fathomless indeed in their cruelty and degradation.

Therefore my plea, dear Sir, is that members of Parliament should not let official statements salve their consciences and that Parliament should take immediate steps to inform itself of the facts so that its discussions and decisions on the question of communal harmony

might be more realistic and balanced. One way of doing this might be to send a study team to the affected areas, not on a flying visit or in the manner of ministerial or official visits but as an earnest and humble search for the truth.

What Parliament will do with the study team's report it will no doubt decide for itself. But may I say that the obsession about Pakistan misusing Indian facts to their advantage is injuring our moral fabric. One of the major diseases from which to my mind we suffer as a nation is the weakness, which after all deceives no one, of appearing holier than we actually are.

Apart from the ethical aspect, I do not think that any problem, whether communal harmony or any other, can ever be satisfactorily solved by starting with false promises and pretending that things are not what in truth they happen to be. If the people are kept in the dark about what is happening in the country they may not be mentally prepared to accept the radical remedies that might become necessary.

In any event the study team's report would have achieved one important purpose, namely that of highlighting the true state of affairs. That in itself would be no small gain. Policies framed after a correct appreciation of facts are more likely to be effective than those made in the dark.

I earnestly hope that this grave and urgent matter will receive the consideration it deserves.

Nagpur Riots*

The communal riots in Nagpur have come as a rude reminder to all of us of the frequency with which riots have taken place in our country in recent months. Till a few years ago it was common in many circles to try to explain away riots in India as a reaction to riots in Pakistan. Such an explanation was never tenable, but it is no longer possible even for the most bigoted persons to trot it out now, for no riots have taken place in Pakistan in recent months.

This should shame us as Indians and help us realise the gravity of the situation. What is at stake is the very future of the country: its survival as a united nation, its character of composite nationhood, its democratic institutions, its culture and civilisation, its progress and development, its good name in the family of nations.

When so much is at stake it is deplorable that the sensible members of all communities—and they constitute the vast majority—should be content to remain helpless spectators and the government should prove uninformed and ineffective. Those who provok or stoke the fires of rioting are all traitors to the country and should be dealt with as such, both by the people and the government.

The fact that nearly every communal riot starts with a trifling incident and quickly spreads like wildfire, often requiring the intervention of the army to put it out, suggests that there are forces at work promoting mutual hatred and sowing seeds of violence. The resulting piles of psychological gunpowder need only a match to blow up in a violent explosion.

These antinational forces work mainly in the dark,

*Press statement published on June 17, 1968

but they are also active in the open. The government, if at all serious, must overhaul and sharpen its intelligence force to be able to unearth the secret organisations and destroy them. As for open activities the government requires only the will to act. For instance there are not a few publications, particularly in the Indian languages, which have been purveying their poison without let or hindrance. There is no question of freedom of the press involved in suppressing them ruthlessly.

In this context I must strongly deplore the behaviour of the commissions set up to inquire into the causes and manner of handling of riots. Where urgency was of the essence, so that the findings of their inquiries could help prevent or control the dangerous malaise, these bodies have proceeded in the most lackadaisical fashion, seemingly intent upon taking as much time as possible.

Apart from overhauling the intelligence services, there is great and urgent need for strengthening and improving the law and order machinery. Wherever the administration has acted promptly and vigorously minor incidents have been prevented from escalating into large-scale killings. What is the exception today can be made the rule tomorrow if the necessary measures are taken. Among them I would stress the need to root out ruthlessly any evidence, however incipient, of communal bias in the services, and to reorient the training law and order officers so as to inculcate in them a spirit of healthy patriotism, impartiality and integrity.

I welcome Mr. Chavan's recent statement about the scrutiny of textbooks, but may I point out that several competent bodies working on different aspects of national integration have submitted reports in the past few years and made several other important recommendations? It is high time that they received the serious attention of the Home Minister and of the state governments.

Let me not give the impression that the problem of communal riots can be solved by the Government alone. The larger part of the responsibility rests on the political parties, the press, social workers, teachers and students

and enlightened members of the general public. Jointly and severally, in every possible way, they must launch a nationwide programme of education and action to promote harmony, not only among Hindus and Muslims but among all the communities in the country. The reports referred to above have many concrete suggestions that might be found useful. All India Radio can play a notable part in this.

A word in the end, with all respect, to the National Integration Council due to meet soon in Srinagar. As all the heads of the central and state governments are members of the council its emphasis should be on action and implementation of agreed policies rather than, as previously, on discussion and study.

I am not suggesting that there is nothing to be discussed or studied in this regard, but there are many obvious and previously accepted policies, some of which have been pointed out above, which need to be put into practice with vigour and determination. Above all, the most elementary duty of the government to ensure security of life for all citizens under its charge must be carried out much more efficiently and effectively than hitherto.

Crime in Gujarat*

In large parts of India, especially in the northern, western and eastern regions, there is a long tradition of resentful relations between the Hindus and Muslims. The historical reason for this is the conquest of a large number of princely Hindu states by Muslim empires. This experience, and its memory, have left a bitter desire for revenge in many Hindu minds. They yield to it whenever the opportunity arises.

More bitterness has been added by the wounds of partition, which are constantly kept open by the state of relations between India and Pakistan. It was heard in the rioting in Ranchi, and it was heard even earlier elsewhere and also in Ahmedabad, that the Muslims were told to get out of India and migrate to Pakistan. Politically this helps Pakistan. The division of India and the creation of Pakistan resulted from communal riots. Pakistan would like the same thing to happen again.

If rioting goes on and the Muslims are able to say that the government is unable to protect them they may ask for some territory where they can protect themselves and live in peace. This would mean a second partition. This is the interest extremist Muslims and pro-Pakistani elements have in promoting riots. This also explains to my mind the fact that in most riots the first provocation has come from Muslims who cannot but be such elements, because ordinary Muslims cannot but realise that if the offensive, however trivial, comes from them they must suffer badly in the present psychological climate. If riots serve Pakistan's national goals the Pakistanis would not mind sacrificing Muslim lives. In this Pakistan is no exception: that is the way all nationstates function.

*Published in the Citizen and Weekend Review, October 11, 1969

Communal Parties

Extremist Hindu parties also have an interest in aggravating communal tensions and violence. Hindu communal and political leaders try to exploit the situation to their advantage. I do not say that they are responsible for the rioting, but they throw their weight behind trouble-makers and exploit such situations to their advantage.

The Jana Sangh and the RSS particularly keep up propaganda that the Muslims cannot be trusted because they are enemies of India. Some of the more sophisticated leaders of the Jana Sangh may say that there is a tradition in India of keeping state and religion apart in a secular fashion. But party workers and RSS cadres who move among the people are spreading communal poison against the Muslims, and they openly say that if 'the Muslims wish to live in India they must Hinduise themselves. That is why people who would not normally say these things, ask the Muslims to get out of the country whenever the tensions of communal rioting overtake them. In this manner the Hindu communalists are playing Pakistan's game.

Change in Pattern

This is the general background of communalism in India. But there have been some changes in the immediate causes of rioting. Upto the rioting in Jamshedpur and Rourkela the immediate provocation was rioting in East Pakistan and the arrival of large numbers of Hindu refugees from that province. The tales of horror the refugees told incited retaliation. But in the past few years the Hindus and Muslims in East Pakistan appear to have lived in peace.

In the agitation against President Ayub Khan in the eastern wing there was large-scale disorder, and at one place more than 1000 houses were burnt. But they were the houses of non-Bengali Muslims. The disorder did not degenerate into communal frenzy but even without this

provocation rioting has continued in India.

There is a clear correlation between the approach of elections and communal tensions. This can be seen in the statistics published by the Union Home Ministry. There is no doubt that rioting is provoked when elections are approaching ,and the main beneficiaries of the resulting tensions are political parties like the Jana Sangh. Most of these riots are not mere sporadic incidents. Occasions are sought to create them so that the consequences may be exploited for political purposes.

The riots in Gujarat had a wider background which gave added reasons to Hindu and Muslim communalists to create and exploit a riot situation. Gujarat had till then been relatively free from the fear of external insecurity, which often makes people susceptible to incitement by propaganda. But after the fighting in Kutch and the attack on Mr Balwant Rai Mehta's aeroplane inside Gujarat territory there was a great deal of excitement and fear. This was aggravated by a large procession of Muslims in protest against the burning of the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Although the slogans the processionists shouted were mainly against Israel they also created some anxiety locally. One slogan was that anyone who clashed with Islam would be destroyed. This provided a dangerous backdrop to still more immediate events.

Rabat Conference

There was the first Islamic conference at Rabat. It was in the interest of some people to show, as the Pakistan President tried to, that there was no communal amity in India and the Indian Muslims were not safe. Then there was the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth and the emphasis on communal harmony in celebrating it. The success of this appeal did not suit some parties. Further, the visit of Badshah Khan might not have been liked by people in Pakistan because he has become much more than a Pakhtoon leader.

In Baluchistan, in Sind, in the whole NWFP and in

East Pakistan he has come to be regarded as a great leader who started a movement for popular freedom and against a single unit in West Pakistan. All these states want the single unit to be dismantled. It must have been in the interest of some people to embarrass Badshah Khan both as a Pakhtoon leader and as an apostle of non-violence. These circumstances emphasise the likelihood of some planning behind the riots in Gujarat although only a full inquiry can prove the exact part these causes played.

Origin of Riots

Much has happened in these riots which suggest that planned provocation was responsible for them. After a very small incident in front of the Jagadish temple, also known as the Jagannath temple, for which Muslim leaders had offered a written apology in time, a mob of 300 suddenly appeared and attacked the gateway, which contained many images of Hindu gods in glass cases. Most of this crowd consisted of young people, and nobody in the area recognised any of them.

They disappeared as suddenly as they came and nobody could say from where they came or where they went. They had bulbs containing acid and other missiles. There is no report and no evidence that they might have been Hindu provocateurs planted there as Muslims to cause incitement to violence. It is more likely that they were pro-Pakistani elements anxious to exploit the situation to benefit Pakistan.

It is quite surprising that the next big incident occurred not near the temple but six miles away in a labour colony. In this and other places where serious rioting occurred in the next few days there were signs of detailed preparations. In many instances it was found that if a shop as well as the premises on which it was located belonged to a Muslim the whole property was burnt, but if there was Muslim shopkeeper in a shop owned by a Hindu only the goods were taken out and burnt, sometimes along with the shopkeeper.

In a few instances when rioters were told that the building they were about to attack belonged to a Hindu they consulted lists they had with them before deciding whether to attack. Electoral rolls were used for finding the names and addresses of people. I was told that some people would suddenly appear in a car at Gujarat University and have consultations with some others. Then more cars followed. These activities caused panic among the hostel students.

Rumour Mongering

Planned use was made of the weapon of rumour. The most fantastic rumours were carefully spread through organised whispering campaigns. One rumour was that large number of Muslims were coming in truckloads to attack Hindus, and it was spread so successfully that even where Hindus, for example students, heavily outnumbered the Muslims in the area they were very worried about their safety. Rumours had unfettered scope for some time because authentic reports were not published immediately, specially reports of the action the authorities took after the incident at the gateway of Jagadish temple on September 18.

The rumours excited Hindu minds, and a number of incendiary leaflets were circulated anonymously. They helped spread communal rioting to a number of places throughout the state, and almost at the same time. Some rioting outside Ahmedabad might have occurred as a spontaneous reaction to what was happening in the state capital. But there was also deliberate provocation and organised exploitation of popular sentiment. There was pro-Hindu sentiment in the official machinery, which could have been more active.

The political leaders relied complacently on Gujarat's fair record of communal amity in recent years. The police machinery did not go into action immediately because, it was stated, they had, standing instructions not to use force in case of "student unrest", etc. Although

these instructions do not apply to communal riots the police were slow in taking action. Gujarat has about 40,000 policemen, of whom 19,000 are armed, but when they were brought in at last they were armed only with lathis.

The surprising thing is that nobody had any premonition of trouble on such a large scale. Most of the Gandhian and Sarvodaya workers function only in the rural areas, but even those who were in Ahmedabad had no advance warning of preparations for riots of such magnitude. These events, and those who exploited them, took social workers as well as the official machinery by surprise.

India-Haters Behind Communal Riots*

Question: There is an impression after your article appeared in a Delhi fortnightly that the Muslims in India want another partition of the country and are therefore instigating disturbances.

Answer: I am very sorry that my article, which really was not an article but a write-up based on an interview, has created misunderstanding. It has never been my view that the Muslims of India want another partition or favour Pakistan by working against the country's interests. What I had said was that the facts published by the Government of India show that in a large majority of Hindu-Muslim riots that have taken place in recent years the initial provocation has come from the Muslims.

Now this is something that needs to be explained and looked into. I cannot understand this because the Muslims in the country, the general run of them, know very well from their previous experience that if they take the offensive in any dispute with Hindus they are bound to receive heavy punishment; retaliation would be out of proportion to what they might have done. What surprises me is that even so Muslims are found to take the initiative in most instances.

Q: How do you explain it?

A: I have propounded a theory, and this is just a theory—and I would be very happy if I am proved wrong—that these things are done deliberately by *agents provocateurs* in league with India-haters in Pakistan, or maybe they are extremist communal and pro-

*Interview published in *The Statesman* on October 30, 1969

Pakistani Indian Muslims. Their number certainly is small, but it does not take many people to start a riot.

They must know that Muslims would be punished, but they do not mind because their motive is political. It does not matter to them if thousands lose their lives provided they serve their cause. Let me add that all this might not even be known to the top people in Pakistan. During British rule and at the time of partition there were British officers who deliberately created or abetted riots, and they were in league with fanatically imperialist elements in British society.

Q: What could be their objective?

A: To harm India. These riots tarnish India's image in the world and bring her prestige down. Then they strike at the unity of the country and retard its social, economic and cultural development, its modernisation.

Second Partition

Finally, and this may appear farfetched, the India-haters might hope that the recurrence of horrors like those of Ahmedabad might one day drive the Indian Muslims to such desperation that they might feel compelled to say to the Hindu community: "We chose this as our country; after partition we did not go to Pakistan; we made India our home, but you people are not able to protect our lives, our honour or our property. Therefore, after having tried our best to live with you for so many years, we cannot bear our condition any longer. You are forcing us to leave. But where can we go? Pakistan will not and cannot take so many of us. So give us a part of your territory." This might lead to a second partition, which would certainly be to the advantage of Pakistan. I am reminded at this point of Mr Jinnah's remarks. When the contours of Pakistan became clear he said it was a motheaten Pakistan, a truncated Pakistan. This was not what he wanted; he wanted the whole of Bengal and Assam, the whole of Punjab and perhaps some

other territory. And this may be at the back of the minds of the *agents provocateurs* and the extreme communalists. All this may sound too fantastic. But did not Pakistan too sound fantastic until it became a fact?

Q: If what you are saying is true, why has not a single agent of the kind you describe been apprehended?

A: Well, there are agents, traitors and spies in every society; how many of them are caught? And I do not have much respect for our intelligence services; otherwise many of these riots could have been prevented.

Q: In many cases, the initial provocations are rather trivial, and yet they have led to serious disturbances. How do you explain this?

A: You are right. In many cases the provocation was trivial. But this was not so in Ahmedabad. But serious or trivial, the Hindu retaliation is always out of all proportion. The reason is Hindu communalism. There are well-organised Hindu bodies like RSS—there may be several others—who are extreme and militant communalists, who believe in a Hindu nation, who think that Hindus alone are the sons of the soil and that Muslims are aggressors and enemies. Some of them may be leaders and members of the Jana Sangh. Certainly there is anti-Muslim, anti-Pakistan propaganda going on all the time in the Hindu community, the shakhas (morning rallies) of RSS are held every day.

An Iceberg

The RSS organisation is like an iceberg; a part of it is visible, the greater part invisible. It is a secret or semi-secret organisation, certainly not a cultural organisation. I am sure there are other less known groups spreading the same kind of poison. This ceaseless propaganda is like stocking dry powder in the community, and when a match is struck there is an explosion. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why Hindus should behave in a manner which brings a

bad name to the country, which retards its development, and which might ultimately lead to its ruin. The Hindu communalists do not realise they are playing Pakistan's game. After all Pakistan was born out of Hindu-Muslim riots, The Muslim League did not fight the British. They did all these things and the British helped them. India was divided. So if the Hindus were really to realise all this they would leave it to the guardians of law and order to deal with the *provocateurs* and not react in the suicidal manner in which they do.

Mass Education

Q: What is your remedy?

A: Apart from what the Government should do—and I don't think it is doing all that needs to be done—it is the duty of those, whether they belong to political parties or not, who have the interest of their country at heart and who understand the danger of communalism to undertake an intensive campaign of mass education. Just as the Hindu communalists are working all the time, they should also be working all the time to counter the propaganda that goes on.

I was shocked when I was told in Ahmedabad that even gentle Gujarati women were saying that since the Muslims had asked for Pakistan and got it they should go away or they would be driven away. And I heard it said that the only solution was an exchange of population with Pakistan. Probably at a time when there is hatred and fury an argument with the people will rebounce. But if healthy, patriotic, enlightened propaganda is conducted I don't think communalists will be able to influence the Hindu mind as they have done so far.

Q: Will you propose a ban on communal parties?

A: Well, no. By nature, I believe in civil liberties, democracy, freedom of expression. By instinct I react against bans. But I also believe that by banning the guilty

organisation we may only drive the disease below the surface. In the end this might prove worse than the remedy.

The real remedy is political education, national education, healthy education of people's minds, of which I have just spoken. This is not done. Once in a while somebody gets us on a platform and condemns communalism, but that is all. I think this is something on which all nationalist, secular, democratic parties should get together, forgetting their ideologies and personal differences, their power struggle and so on. They could join hands at least on this one programme and meet the challenge of Hindu, Muslim or any other communalism because communalism of any kind is antinational and a danger to the country.

Conciliation Between India and Pakistan

Q: Don't you think that conciliation between India and Pakistan will go a long way to solve the communal problem here?

A: I am quite sure it would go a long way. Perhaps Badshah Khan's visit to India will prove a major contribution to India-Pakistan conciliation, Perhaps if a democratic system is established in Pakistan and if leaders like those whose names we hear come to power—I don't wish to name them, otherwise somebody there will brand them Hindu agents—democratic and healthy-minded people, not sectarian, not communal, not steeped in hatred like some Pakistani leaders of old days. Then it would be easier. But I think the two things are interlinked—what comes first and what comes next is difficult to say.

We should fight communalism in our country. It is our responsibility and we must fight it in a constructive manner. It is not a law and order question alone. At the same time we should also try to start a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan. How that can be done is of course not easy to say. But this much I am sure of.

If the government takes a firm decision in the larger national interest it would not be difficult to find the answer.

Q: How do you explain that the socalled progressive forces, the labourers and the students, have been in the forefront of riots? This was so in Ranchi and has been seen in Ahmedabad.

A: You are quite right, and I have spoken about this myself. I believe those whom you call progressives are very much up in the air. They talk in terms of their isms, their economic progress and so on, but I don't think any progressive party has tried to deal with these psychological questions or tried really to educate the working classes about the duties of citizenship, about the dangers of communalism and so on.

Positive Work

In the absence of any positive work on these lines among them—after all they are common people and they react like common people, there is not much hope. To say that just because they are workers—there is a tendency to idolise the working class—they are revolutionaries is all wrong. They might play a revolutionary role under proper leadership; they might play a reactionary role under a different kind of leadership. So I would blame the progressive leaders, the progressive groups for having neglected their job, because as you said in most of the recent riots in the cities the industrial areas were the worst affected.

Q: May I ask what Gandhiji would have done if he had been alive today?

A: If Gandhiji were alive I would say these things would probably have not happened at all, because had he lived all these 22 years he would I think have changed the entire shape of things. Under the compulsion of circumstances he accepted Pakistan; it was more or less forced on him. But he did not accept the fact of millions of people migrating from one side to the

other. He said this was temporary. He was going to work to restore the displaced persons to their original homes. Gandhiji was thinking of going to Pakistan, and if I am not mistaken Mr Jinnah himself was very much shocked by the scale of the postpartition riots. I don't think he had visualised it or was prepared for it. I think Gandhiji would have started from that point itself, and I'm sure that by now things would have been much better. But if Gandhiji were to come today, suddenly descend from the heavens, what he would do is very very difficult to say. He might be crucified a second time, you know.

Question of Minorities*

While everyone in India and elsewhere would condemn the ghastly treatment of the minority communities in East Pakistan it would be self-defeating to slur over the events in West Bengal. Comparisons between the degree of suffering inflicted in both countries upon innocent human beings, or the attempt to belittle or explain away what happened in our own country as being a mere reaction to the events across the border, are dangerous tricks of the mind which cannot but have disastrous consequences.

It is therefore heartening to learn from the Indian Home Minister that all political parties in West Bengal are unanimous in their determination to see that no harm is done to a single member of the minority community. This is particularly heartening because in the Calcutta riots the popular feeling and thinking in West Bengal was that the only way to assure fair treatment to the minorities in East Pakistan was to practise the deterrent philosophy of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye.

I express my happiness at the firm declaration of Shri Gulzarilal Nanda that the question of exchange of population could never even be contemplated as a solution of Indo-Pakistan communal problem. I also welcome the announcement by the Home Minister that in this matter too all the political parties in West Bengal were united. Apparently a rapid and healthy movement of thought had taken place in West Bengal because my own discussions at the time of the riots in Calcutta revealed a dangerous state of mind which freely expressed itself in terms of exchange of population.

*JP's speech at the annual conference of the West Bengal Smarak Nidhi

Notwithstanding all good resolutions of parties and citizens and pronouncements of high official policy, the human mind being what it is bound in moments of stress to plunge into irrational courses. It is my conviction that neither in Pakistan nor in India are the minorities safe, nor is peace and tranquility and healthy inner and outward growth assured to the peoples of both the countries unless their leaders agree to sit around a table with the honest and firm determination to settle all outstanding disputes, including the dispute over Kashmir.

I do not agree with those who believe that no matter whatever we do to settle the dispute with Pakistan that country's enmity towards India will never abate because anti-Indianism is the very life-breath of Pakistan. I do not hold this view not only because I have faith in human nature but also because I am sure that the leaders of both countries are realistic enough to understand that it is in the interest of their respective countries that they bury the hatchet and clasp one another's hand and march forward together.

If the experience of the last 17 years since independence has proved anything, it is that the partition of India has settled no problems. Common interest and the compulsions of the objective situation demand that the two countries move closer together and establish in some fashion, may be of the slenderest kind to begin with, a tradition of joint working. The words confederation, alliance, community, association, concord might irk and annoy at the present moment. But I am certain that history insists on some such destiny for India and Pakistan.

In this connection it may be recalled that it was only a few years ago President Ayub Khan pleaded for a policy of a "joint defence" and Prime Minister Nehru called for a no-war declaration. Those were elements out of which an association of nations could be created. True, much water has flowed down the Ganga since then. But they still serve as eloquent reminders of the possible dawn

of the realisation on both sides of the border that the destinies of the two countries are inextricably linked by history, geography and other circumstances.

Kashmir

Turning to Kashmir, I disagree with those who speak and act as if the Kashmir issue has been settled once and for all and that the people of Kashmir have put their seal of consent upon that settlement. The very "hellfire," to use the expression of Shri Nanda, through which the minority community has recently passed in East Pakistan bears tragic testimony to the fact that the issue is far from settled. If we do not relate these facts we are behaving like ostriches. He said the problem was not legal, nor was it so much a question of facts and of apportioning praise or blame. It was a human and political problem and had to be approached in that light. What was needed was fearless application of those high political and human principles to which this country has been devoted from the beginning.

Referring to the present situation in Jammu and Kashmir, I commend the remarkable communal harmony which obtained in the recent anxious days in the state. I praise the wise and courageous manner in which Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri handled the situation. But I regret the lack of similar policy in dealing with the political issues which the situation in the state has thrown up. It is widely felt that the Kashmir Government does not enjoy the confidence and support of the people of the state. Delay in correcting the situation is fraught with great risks.

The Task Ahead*

Today is Martyr's Day. It was on this day 18 years ago that the Father of the Nation was martyred in the cause of communal harmony and harmony between India and Pakistan. Gandhiji as you know was against partition, but he acquiesced in it because he was unwilling to disown and range himself against the Congress "High Command," which to his great sorrow had made up its mind to defy the leader it had followed for a quarter-century.

But at the same time he had decided to strain his nerves to heal the wounds of that tragic event and to bring the estranged and separated brothers together to live in friendship and cooperation. He even dared to dream of creating conditions in which the millions of refugees could return to their original homes. But to our eternal shame and sorrow he was not allowed to realise his dream.

Since 1948 this day has been observed every year as Martyr's Day. The event has however become just one of the numerous national ceremonies in which our country abounds, without inducing any serious thought or action on behalf of the cause for which Gandhiji gave his life. The result, until a few weeks ago, was that their was a permanent state of tension between the two countries, leading sometimes to open hostility and frequent communal riots in both.

The Council for Communal Harmony was born out of one such riot in Calcutta, and during its brief span of life it has done remarkably well. A year ago in this very hall I had the privilege of addressing the first conference of the council. That was a time when it was not very popular,

*Speech at the Council for Communal Harmony, Calcutta, on January 31, 1965

to say the least, to work for Hindu-Muslim harmony and Indo-Pak friendship. Mrs Maitreyi Devi and her coworkers should be congratulated for the courage and persistence with which they have pursued their patriotic and human goal in spite of all manner of misunderstanding even calumny.

A great deal has happened in the Indian subcontinent since the last conference. There were moments in this period when from the point of view of Hindu-Muslim relations the situation had turned truly dismal. Fortunately there has been a miraculous transformation in the psychological climate in both sister-countries of the subcontinent. Only till the other day both nations were seized with intense feelings of hate and hostility, and suddenly now their is calm and an upsurge of feelings of friendship and hope.

The three authors of this miracle, the late Prime Minister Shastri, President Ayub Khan and Chairman Kosygin, deserve the deepest gratitude of the sixty crores. of people of the subcontinent. Of the three it was Mr. Shastri particularly who has proved to be a messiah of peace for the people of this country. It was due to his brilliant leadership in war and peace, and to his remarkable gift for establishing rapport with the minds and hearts of the people, and above all his martyrdom, that there is now visible in this country a really serious concern for reaching a lasting friendship and understanding with Pakistan.

The Task Ahead

For the members of this council and for all those who have worked and craved for communal harmony the present is indeed a time for rejoicing. But we would be making a great mistake if we assumed that all was well on the communal front and there was nothing further to do. A similar mistake was made in regard to national integration at the time of the Chinese attack, but it did not take long for the mistake to be discovered. The tasks of communal harmony and national integration, which

are interrelated, have still to be accomplished, and they cannot be accomplished except through ceaseless vigilence and endeavour.

While it was a matter of deep gratification that no communal incidents took place in the recent Indo-Pak conflict either in India or in East Pakistan, it cannot be denied that in this country at any rate, and I am sure it must have been the same across the border, that there was uneasy communal feeling. Most Hindus looked with suspicion at their Muslim neighbours, and most Muslims lived in anxiety and even in fear. Any mischievous *agent provocateur's* could have unleashed communal violence at a suitable moment.

That such a tragedy did not occur was not due so much to trust and harmony between the two major communities as to the fact that even those elements which are normally behind such incidents had perhaps instinctively felt that communal disturbances might prejudice the war effort. But now that the war has ended and the battle for peace begun such elements may consider themselves freed from self-restraint. History has shown that it is far more difficult to make peace than to make war. Peace, if it is to be fair and lasting, must do justice to both sides.

This means that both sides should be prepared for concessions and mutual adjustments. It is just because of this that narrowminded ultras find it convenient to throw a spanner into the works and wreck peacemaking. The *agent provocateurs* come into their own at such times. Therefore there should be no complacency on the part of those who are working for communal harmony and national integration. Taking full advantage of the current friendly Indo-Pak feelings, the council and others who share its vision must redouble their efforts.

National Integration Conference

Since the National Integration Conference of 1961 various committees and bodies have studied various aspects of national integration, emotional integration, etc.

The results of these studies, so prematurely halted, should be brought together and widely publicised. Official and nonofficial agencies should be stimulated to propagate and put them into practice; and there should be coordination between both types of agencies. The study of the problems involved should be resumed. Fortunately the National Gandhi Centenary Committee has set up a committee to work on the question of national integration, of which communal harmony is a vital part.

I shall conclude these brief remarks with a few suggestions—none of them new—for promotion of communal harmony. Hindus and Muslims have lived together side by side as neighbours in town and village for centuries. Yet there is in each of them an almost complete ignorance of the religion of the other. Ignorance is as you know the mother of every kind of prejudice and of much mischief. It is a serious defect of education in this country that members of one community do not know the beliefs and practices of others with whom they live their daily lives.

To correct this a deliberate effort should be made through our schools to create better understanding in this respect. If the young come to understand one another a firm foundation would have been laid of communal harmony and national integration. Appropriate literature should be produced for the purpose. Special efforts should be made to bring together the youth of different communities through common hostels, work camps, joint relief work, excursions, sports, cultural programmes, such as dramas, shows, etc.

At the people's level I would suggest promotion of joint participation in festivals, socials, community activities and similar popular functions.

One serious cause of latent ill-will between the communities, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, is prejudiced writing of Indian history. Events and personalities of history have been presented in such form that misunderstanding and resultant ill-will tend to be refreshed from generation to generation. Objective, unprejudiced rewriting of Indian history is to my mind an essential step

towards communal harmony.

In many instances the contributory factors of communal tension and violence are of economic and social character. For instance, in the last riots in Orissa and Bihar around Rourkela and Jamshedpur the fact that most of the local distilleries were owned by Muslims became a contributing factor. Non-Muslim competitors found it profitable to fan the riots. In the Adivasi areas likewise the fact that Muslim contractors and shopkeepers were in the habit of taking a number of "wives" from among the tribals and had failed to give them their rightful legal or social status had created latent hostility against them and provided a motive for revenge.

Aligarh University

The fact that many graduates of Aligarh University have gone to Pakistan is sometimes put forward as evidence of the lack of patriotism in a section of the Muslim intelligentsia. This leads to tension between the communities. But few take the trouble to go deep into the question. The fact is that while in government service educated Muslims get their due share of employment, if not more, Indian business homes and other private employers generally are reluctant to admit them. The remedy lies in a rational solution rather than creation of suspicion and tension.

In view of this situation it is necessary to make scientific studies of different situations of communal tension, identify the causes and remove them from the root. This would require a far more rational approach to the problem than has been in evidence so far.

One last word and I have finished. The Hindus being the much larger community the responsibility for winning the confidence of the minority communities rests squarely on them. I am afraid the Hindu community does not always recognise this. May one hope that Shastriji's martyrdom and the Tashkant spirit will make us Hindus more conscious of our responsibility?

Ranchi Riots : Some Serious Questions*

The Ranchi riots have raised a number of serious questions which should receive urgent and careful consideration from those who feel concerned for the quality of our life and culture and the future of our nation.

I first visited Ranchi on August 26, but had to return the next evening to keep an important engagement at Sewagram, Wardha. On returning from there, I again visited the town on Saturday, September 9. On my first visit I had set up a Shanti Sena camp under the leadership of Shri Saryu Prasad, Sanchalak of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Bihar. There were 50 Shantisainiks working last Saturday; 40 of them were drawn from different districts of Bihar, and each of them was a prominent Sarvodaya Sewak. I had also placed at Saryu Babu's disposal a jeep and money and goods for the relief of riot sufferers, Hindu and Muslim.

I found on Saturday that Ranchi, Hatia and the environs had returned to "normal," but tension persisted in the air and there was lack of mutual trust and a feeling of insecurity. In Ranchi town Hindus and Muslims were returning to their homes, but not so in Hatia, the Heavy Engineering Corporation township. I advised the minority community not to press for separate residential areas because that would only generate greater mistrust and strengthen the trends of separatism.

Healing of Heart and Mind

The knife-lacerated bodies have recovered or are recovering; but will the hate-lacerated hearts and minds

*Published in the *Indian Nation,* Patna

be ever normal again? Perhaps the fact that there were men in both communities who even at the height of the rioting did not lose their humanity and who tried to help whoever was in distress, will help this process.

So will the fact that there was someone like Shri Ramanand Tiwari, the Police Minister, whose amazing bravery, deep humanity and firm leadership saved hundreds of threatened lives; the fact that the Chief Minister rushed immediately to Ranchi with his colleagues to throw the power and resources of the state behind the task of bringing the town back to civilisation; the fact that the Governor was there all through to guide and counsel; the fact that the armed forces, military and police, gave protection to all without discrimination; the fact that Shantisainiks hastened from different parts of Bihar to serve and heal. These facts and others like them may help heal hearts and establish human fellowship again.

But I should like to emphasise that the healing of hearts and minds will not depend only upon the behaviour of the majority community. Much will also depend on the behaviour of the minority.

Relief Measures

The main responsibility of relief and rehabilitation is that of the government, which has been assisted by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. But there is also non-official relief. While some of this relief (like those of the Christian churches the Central Relief Committee, the Shanti Sena etc.) is rendered without any communal discrimination there is also sectarian relief. This is not a happy trend. It would be better to pool all private resources and operate relief jointly. Such working together would in itself help remove tension and distrust.

Political Parties

Another distressing aspect of the situation is that even in the face of such a human tragedy it has not been possible

for the political parties in Ranchi or in the state to make a common nonpartisan approach to a problem that in all conscience is serious and dangerous enough. It should have been easy for them to do so because they all condemned the violence in unambiguous terms. But unfortunately they make it an occasion for accusation and counter-accusation. In such situations, partisan judgements are necessarily undependable. Happily in this instance, unlike the Jamshedpur riots, the Bihar Government has ordered a judicial inquiry.

Police Morale

The Ranchi incidents have once again turned the spotlight on the present state of police morale. It appears that with public opinion being what it is at present the police are reluctant to act even when action is clearly called for. It is said that the Damocles' sword of inquiry that hangs over their necks inhibits police action. The result is that where an ounce of action at an earlier stage might have proved sufficient even a pound later turns out to be inadequate.

This situation calls urgently for a change in the attitude of both the public and the police. If there is to be reasonable order and security in Bihar a climate of opinion has to be created in which the police may function without fear of a priori censure. On the part of the police too there must be radical change of attitude. The police have no doubt changed since the days of British rule, but not enough. This matter needs to be closely looked into by the Police Ministry.

As to a judicial inquiry, I see no reason why this should have a demoralising effect on the force. After all a large majority of judicial findings have upheld police action. Further, in a democracy the police cannot expect a free hand, just as no responsible public opinion can refuse to allow for errors of judgement at moments of stress and danger.

The above issues, though important, are the lesser ones raised by Ranchi. As I indicated at the outset, the two vital issues highlighted concern the very quality of our being, our humanity, and the future of the country as a nation. The first is about the deeper things of life—religion, morality, education, character, in short, our culture. The kind of acts committed at Ranchi had nothing to do with these things.

There must be something terribly wrong with our upbringing, with the religious beliefs which have been inculcated in us, the education that is being imparted, the group attitudes which are being developed by assiduous propaganda to make it possible for otherwise normal human beings to change suddenly into blood-thirsty monsters. There is no dearth of gurus, sadhus, fakirs, priests, mullahs, padrees, schools, colleges, universities; yet man in India is growing more savage than human. The basic task of spirituality, religion, education is to make man truly human. Spiritual teachers, religious leaders, educationists should give serious thought to this central problem.

Indoctrination

The Union Home Minister said at Ranchi that such large-scale rioting could not have occured without prior organisation. That is quite possible. But I believe the more deepseated cause is the systematic undercover organisation, propaganda and indoctrination which have been going on for years past and aimed to inculcate, in the youth particularly, sentiments of narrow nationalism, religious bigotry and arrogance, mutual suspicion and hatred. It is time to find out what is happening in the country, what divisive, venomous and virulent activities are going on ostensibly under the guise of cultural or religious activities.

Intelligence, both civil and military, has been the

weakest point of the Union as well as of the state governments. I am sure that if the authorities knew what was cooking in Ranchi they could have prevented the outbreak or put out the fire at the first flicker. But that was not the weakness of the Ranchi administration alone: that is a national weakness which can be neglected further at grave peril to the nation.

Divisions

As to the danger to national unity from such outbreaks of civic violence, it would be obvious enough if we take a hard look at the divisions in the country into religion, race, language, caste, territory, etc. We do not realise on what a veritable volcano of disruption we are sitting. We also tend to forget the history of our country from ancient times down to the British conquest. It was a history of endemic and chronic internecine war, interspersed with shortlived periods when a great power like that of Mauryas or the Guptas or of Harsha or the Mughals imposed their imperial sway over the land and maintained order and political unity.

Urdu and Hindi

The tendency to attempt to solve national problems by violence has been growing in the past years. If this tendency is not checked soon the danger of national disintegration cannot be lightly brushed aside. The ostensible issue behind the Ranchi riots was Urdu, and Hindus and Muslims fought one another. A few years ago in Assam the issue was Bengali and Assamese. Hindus fought Bengali Hindus, as a result of which something like 40,000 Bengalis had to flee to West Bengal. Before the last general election there were serious anti-Hindi riots in Tamil Nadu, and bitter feelings against the North were generated and have not yet abated. In Calcutta anti-non-Bengali feeling has been smouldering for years and a flare-up may occur at the least provocation. There are

places in Bihar where anti-Bengali feeling is not much below the surface.

Only the other day Hindus and Sikhs and Hindus and Hindus were attacking one another—Hindus even burnt a shop with other Hindus hiding inside it—all over the issue of Punjabi Suba. South Indians are complaining of growing insecurity in cosmopolitan Bombay. There are violent bundhs, gheraos, and the threat of a "thousand Naxalbaris," all this at a time when the central and state governments are becoming weaker and high prices, food scarcity and growing unemployment are fanning the fires of discontent. At such a critical moment those who resort to violence to settle a public issue, whether Urdu or any other, are undermining, may be unwittingly, both democracy and the integrity of the nation.

A word about Urdu. Apart from the merits of the case I cannot put up the thought out of my mind that had all the parties concerned, including the Hindi and Urdu enthusiasts, tried to keep the agitation on the question within reasonable bounds and observed the ordinary decencies of public life and presented the issues truthfully to the public, the situation would not have become so explosive. Unfortunately much intemperate and inflammatory language was used in speeches, writings and slogans; misrepresentation and outright lying were given free rein, unmannerly demonstrations were held and fanned the smouldering fires.

Though no Education Minister in India had done so much for Hindi as Shri Karpoori Thakur, hell was let loose over his devoted head. The internal tensions within the United Front Government on the question were permitted to be given public and bitter expression. All this build-up of hostility was bound to issue forth in violence somewhere or other. I am sure that the parties to the dispute had never intended such a denouncement. But they should know that when they were dealing with such a sensitive question as language, which in this unfortunate instance got mixed up with communal sensibilities, they were playing with dynamite. I hope Ranchi has taught

everyone a lesson which will not be easily forgotten.

Reconsider the Issue

As to the merits of the Urdu question, though I would be the last person to suggest that the government change its policy at the point of the rioter's knife I fear that the four parties which committed themselves to making it the second state language in Bihar did so in haste and without a detailed examination of its full implications. I would respectfully suggest therefore that the government reconsider the question. It is my considered view that it would be inadvisable to make Urdu or any other language the second official language of the state. At the same time I would plead that those who want to read and use Urdu in their public dealings should be given every necessary facility without stint.

A Word to Muslims

One final word. I have often taken the liberty to chastise the Hindus whenever I felt the need for it. I have also tendered advise to the Muslims. But I feel there is need at this moment to speak more plainly to them. The Muslims who opted for India and decided to make their home here should realise that though their Hindu countrymen, except for a few mad people, do not want to harm, much less destroy, Pakistan partition has left a deep wound in their hearts. And they remember that many Muslims and Muslim leaders who made India their home, particularly in Bihar and UP, were once passionate advocates of Pakistan. It is for that reason that there is such mistrust in their hearts. Unfortunately there are still Muslim organisations which under the guise of religious or cultural activity emphasise the separateness of the Muslim community and ignore Hindu susceptibilities and keep aloof from the mainstream of national and social life. I am not unaware of the many problems the Muslims face, even the discrimination they meet with in certain

quarters. But it is not only the majority community or the nation as a whole which has to change its attitude; the Muslim community must also do so. It is not enough to point to the Muslim leaders who in the days of the freedom movement fought shoulder to shoulder with other Indians and who rejected the two-nation theory. Their presence in our midst is reassuring. They also feel reassured by such shining examples of patriotism as Mr Abdul Hamid. But the Hindus do not forget that by and large it was not the old nationalist Muslim leaders who were accepted as leaders by the Indian Muslims but those others who ardently advocated the two-nation theory. I hope they have changed their minds now, but it should cause no surprise if suspicion lingers in many minds. That suspicion needs to be removed.

I am conscious that a growing number of Muslims, particularly of the younger generation, have achieved considerable success in this direction, and that their task would have been much easier if their efforts had not been impeded by some extremist Hindu sections. The fact however remains that by and large the real Muslim leaders have developed a tendency to place all responsibility for Muslim misfortunes on the shoulders either of the Hindus or the government. Little genuine effort has been made to turn the searchlight inward.

I fear that what I am saying may arouse bitter anger. I should be sorry however for those who may be angry. I am speaking as a friend, as one who is deeply concerned about the future of the Indian Muslims and of the future of our country as a nation.

LANGUAGE AND STATES REORGANISATION

Linguistic States

The Socialist Party has accepted the principle of linguistic provinces, subject to two important conditions. First, the national language, namely Hindustani, must within a reasonable period of time replace English; second, the linguistic provinces must satisfy the conditions of geographic integrity and economy solvency.

With regard to Bombay, the party considers Bombay a part of Maharashtra and believes that if and when linguistic provinces are carved out Bombay should go to the province of Samyukta Maharashtra.

The Indian political climate is in many ways abnormal and irrational today. Issues which should be decided objectively and with calm deliberation are complicated and vitiated by the introduction of a great deal of unnecessary emotion and animus. The issue of linguistic provinces is an instance in point. The Socialist Party believes that this is an issue which should be decided in an atmosphere of calm and amity. Accordingly, the party unreservedly supports the plea of the Prime Minister, that the whole question of linguistic provinces be put aside for a period of ten years.

*Statement published in the *Indian News Chronicle*, Delhi, August 30, 1948

States Reorganisation*

In view of recent developments in the country in regard to reorganisation of states I feel it my duty to place my humble views before the country. It should be understood that these are entirely my personal views.

First of all, I should like to say that these developments have further convinced me of the supreme value of Vinobaji's movement. They have brought out more clearly than ever before the need to concentrate on the fundamental task of converting the minds and hearts and values of the people. It is only when the values that Vinobaji is preaching and seeking to establish in our hearts—the values of a shared and cooperative life—come to be accepted and practised—that the present discords and distempers of society will disappear. The recent disturbances have however shown that Vinoba's movement, or rather the entire Sarvodaya or Gandhian view of life, has not made sufficient headway yet to control our actions. But that is no reason to be distracted from the main task: rather it is the more reason for concentrating upon it.

While engaged in this task it becomes necessary sometimes to review and evaluate current events and trends, not with a view to condemn or criticise but in a spirit of helpfulness.

There is no doubt that everyone concerned, including the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) and the Government of India, has tried his best, and in good faith, to solve a rather difficult problem. But looking back—and it is easy to be wise after the event—it has to be admitted that mistakes have been made. It is necessary to take stock and profit from our mistakes.

*Press statement released on November 5, 1956

Lack of Guidelines

It seems to me that we have never been clear about what we wanted and on what basic principles we were endeavouring to reorganise the states. In spite of its praiseworthy labours SRC did not follow any consistent principles and made contradictory recommendations. Practical considerations had no doubt to be taken into account and compromises made, but nevertheless there is a lack of guiding principles in its report.

The same I am afraid is true of the decisions of the Government of India in this matter. Politics, expediency, the interests of pressure groups seem to have played a more decisive role than any clearly defined principles. Or if there were any principles taken into consideration they were contradictory and the emphasis on them varied from time to time. The whole question seems to have been handled in a half hearted manner and without any firm convictions. The result is the utter confusion that we have today.

I do not agree with the view that this question should have been shelved for the next 15 or 20 years. That would be running away from our difficulties. Because they relate to the foundations of a nation's life such questions must always be tackled at the stage when those foundations are being laid. Moreover, it is better that this question is settled in the lifetime of the present leaders of the country. Already the absence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is being keenly felt by all.

Concept of a Union

What principles then should guide our action in this matter? First of all, I think the conception of India as a Union of States is entirely wrong and contrary to fact and historical development. The analogy neither of USA nor of USSR applies to our country. India is one nation and one country and therefore one state. The parts that were carved out of it to make our neighbouring country

were too an integral part of it.

But just as when two brothers cannot live together they decide to separate, Pakistan was separated from us; and now we have nothing but the utmost goodwill and the friendliest feelings for our separated brothers. The rest of India—despite the partition—remains one nation and one country. The title Union of India is illconceived and meaningless.

From this point of view it would have been quite logical to have had a unitary form of Government. But we have rightly decided against that. India is a vast country, with a vast population and all manner of varieties. A unitary government would be illsuited to India. It would be too far removed from the people, whose participation in it would be a constitutional fiction rather than a reality; it would lead us not to democracy but to some sort of oligarchy. For the proper functioning of democracy a structure of government is required which would allow the utmost opportunity to the people to run their affairs directly. Decentralisation of government has therefore been rightly accepted by us as the pattern to follow. Indeed this pattern will have to be followed more and more everywhere the more democracy progresses.

Accordingly the country should be divided into provinces. I would not call them states. For this division there should be some scientific basis, which should also accord with public opinion.

Size of States

One consideration to my mind should be the size of these provinces. They should not be too large, nor too small. If they are too large the people would not be able to experience self-rule. In that case we might as well have a unitary government, which we have rejected. If on the other hand they are too small they would not be economically viable. But they should be small enough for the provincial ministers—and not only district officers—to maintain direct contact with the people, to be easily

accessible to them, and to attend to the details of administration and developmental activities. Also the provincial assemblies should be of a manageable size and the constituencies not so large that representatives are unable to maintain personal touch with the people.

Not only from the point of view of administration but also from the point of view of development, small provinces are desirable, for in such compact areas developmental work, receiving the close and direct attention of the government, can grow faster than in large unwieldy areas. It should also be kept in view that the centre would be in a better position to deal with small provinces than with large. The strength of the centre would be assured that way.

Once the provinces are formed, zonal councils, as proposed by the Prime Minister, may be constituted to coordinate developmental and other activities. These councils may be invested with more than advisory powers.

India is naturally divided into linguistic areas, some of which are small and some large. The major language areas are not too many. People speaking the same language and inhabiting a compact area, though loyal and devoted to the country as a whole, have certain affinities and like to live their lives in their own way. Therefore what more natural than to make language another important basis on which to carve out the provinces? Where the linguistic area is too large it may be split so that the provinces may not be too unwieldy.

Linguistic States

I am aware that the Prime Minister has warned against the dangers of linguism, and there is cause enough for his warning. But let not the disturbances make us panicky and compel us hastily to retreat from positions taken after due deliberation. All these years language had been tacitly understood to be one basis, at least, of the reorganisation of the states. Linguistic hopes have been built on this tacit understanding, and it will be dangerous

to thwart these hopes at this stage. Moreover there is nothing antinational, or any danger to national unity, in the demand for linguistic provinces. The Andhras agitated long for a province of their own, and when their demand was granted their loyalty to India remained unimpaired, if indeed it did not increase. What mischief occured and bitterness arose were due to the delay in conceding to their demand.

History shows that language is a very intractable question. It is by no means peculiarly Indian. The history of Central and Eastern Europe bears testimony to the stubbornness of this problem. The Republics of Russia are based broadly on linguistic areas. So are those in Yugoslavia. So it is in many democratic countries. I therefore wish to warn against suppressing the language question. That way lies danger to national unity. Let us not invest this natural desire with the epithets of parochialism, or treat it as a crime against the nation. The present exaggerations and aberrations of linguism would not have appeared had we frankly accepted the linguistic case and proceeded fairly and squarely to meet it.

Boundary Questions

In demarcating the provinces boundary questions will naturally arise. Boundary areas everywhere are bilingual, and with the best of intentions a mistake might be made in drawing a particular line of demarcation. A proper method should be found to solve such boundary disputes. They should never be made issues of political controversy. I feel that had the linguistic demand been frankly accepted and fairly dealt with, and had an agreed method been evolved for solving boundary disputes these disputes would not have assumed their present proportions. I suggest the following procedure in this regard. First, the parties to the dispute should be asked to solve it among themselves. Failing that, the matter should be referred to arbitration, if the parties i.e., the governments concerned agree to abide by the award. In extreme cases a plebiscite

might be held and the wishes of the people consulted. Failing all efforts the central government should give the decision and enforce it with all its power. There must be a finality to every dispute. Once the reorganisation of the provinces has been carried out on a satisfactory basis, it should not be a matter of such vital concern what little strip of boundary territory is annexed to what province. We must learn to subordinate the interest of the part to that of the whole.

The case of Bombay city is not that of a boundary dispute. I have always held that Bombay is a part of Maharashtra, and I feel that it should have been handed over to the Samyukta Maharashtra with grace and goodwill. The Maharashtrians would then have freely agreed to any special arrangements in view of Bombay's cosmopolitan character and economic status. Even now the Government of India should reconsider its decision. This might appear as yielding to hooliganism in Bombay, which was like the foam crowning the surging seas below. No one should fear the foam, but it is wise to mind the seas.

Bombay Trouble

A word about the disturbances in Bombay. They should be a warning to the whole country, but specially to the Maharashtrians themselves. The hooliganism shows to what depths we could descend in this country. It tore the veil off our much-vaunted culture and showed it in all its ugliness. This is not a question of democracy or nonviolence but a simple question of culture and of ordinary human decency. Some Maharashtrians atleast showed by their conduct that they were less than human, and it is not clear that they met with the general disapprobation of their community. The few voices which were raised in protest were drowned in the universal howl. The brave and saintly Appa Saheb Patwardhan had to pay the price for raising his noble voice. The appeal sent to the press by Shri Nathji, a living rishi, never saw light

in the Marathi press. Shri Shankerrao Deo, the accepted leader of yesterday, was disowned and driven to a fast of atonement. Rao Saheb Patwardhan too is atoning for the deeds of his compatriots. But there is no indication yet of the fact that the Maharashtrians have realised the grave injury they have done not only to the Gujaratis, not only to India, but also to themselves and their cause. They are still talking in the language of war and do not seem to realise that even if Bombay is now given to them it is lost to them forever, if they do not try to win back the affection and confidence of their countrymen who have made Bombay their home. The task of the hour is not to find other ways of agitation but to find ways of healing the wounds which have been inflicted. Maharashtrians and Gujaratis are limbs of Mother India. How can India live if these wounds continue to bleed and how can Maharashtrians rejoice when India bleeds?

It is proper here to pay a tribute to the patience, patriotism and nobility of the Gujarati community, who have desisted from retaliatory action not only in Bombay, where they are in a minority, but also in the cities of Gujarat.

A feature of these disturbances everywhere has been the part political parties have played in them. They all profess to follow peaceful methods. In the case of some of them it was a question of failing to stop the whirlwind they had sown. The disturbances proved the complete failure of their leaders. But in the case of some other parties peaceful professions do not go beyond the lips. In Bombay the communalist acid-bulb technique was once again to the fore. And so was the spirit which presided over Gandhiji's assasination, making a pitiful exhibition of its own view of Hindu culture by garlanding pictures of the nation's father and of the Prime Minister with shoes. The only cure for such diseases of the body politic is a healthy growth of the mass mind-inculcation in it of human values, the moulding of it towards spontaneously civilised conduct. All men of good-

will each in his own way, must devote themselves to this vital task.

Bengal-Bihar Merger

Before I conclude I had better say a word about the Bengal-Bihar merger. In view of the principles I have enunciated above it should be clear that I cannot see any reason to support such a move. Further, the way the proposal originated does not inspire confidence in me. It was more in the nature of an escape from a difficult situation rather than the result of any sudden increase in mutual goodwill. It is remarkable that the Chief Ministers should have first found it impossible to agree upon little strips of territory and then made the startling agreement to merge their states, as merger solved the problem over which at least one of them was prepared to resign. That way we are all merged in one great country. Does that automatically solve all our problems? The proposal has been described as the *amrita* after the *halahal*. To me it seems to be just plain seawater.

I should like to make it clear that I am not opposed to the merger because I think it would harm Bihar. Indeed if I took a partisan view I would support the proposal, because in the balance it would help Bihar more. But I have no wish to be partisan. I want Bengal to prosper as much as Bihar. I am opposed to the merger proposal because this is not the way to settle disputes, and it goes against what I consider the sound principles of reorganisation of the provinces of our country.

States Reorganisations-....

Some time ago I had occasion to express my views on the problem of states reorganisation. It is a matter of great satisfaction that except for the question of Bombay and some minor boundary disputes this vexed problem has at last been settled. Those responsible for bringing about this settlement deserve our hearty congratulations. That the settlement has not followed any scientific and uniform principles has no doubt to be regretted, but that cannot take away from the joy that every Indian must feel at the amicable settlement of a difficult national problem. There is every reason to hope now that, given patience and mutual goodwill, the remaining problems too would be satisfactorily settled. It is the duty of every Indian—Maharashtrian, Gujarati and other—to create the necessary atmosphere for this consummation. No decision imposed by force on any party can conduce to national well-being. Whatever ultimately happens to Bombay city, Maharashtrians and Gujaratis will have to live together as children of a common mother inhabiting a common national home. Whether they live amicably as brothers or in a state of subdued mutual hostility is any day more important than the ultimate status of Bombay. I am convinced of the justice of Maharashtra's case, but even a good case can be spoiled by bad pleading. The recent events in Bombay have done great harm to the cause of Maharashtra. I am sure however that in spite of the ugly incidents there is a better appreciation now of the intensity of Maharashtrian feeling, and more so of the danger of leaving that feeling to smoulder.

Need for Unity

This is a time therefore when Maharashtrian leaders

should dispassionately take stock of the situation and carefully consider their future course of action. It seems clear to me that any agitation or satyagraha in the present circumstances would be ill-advised and unnecessary. The task of the hour is to unite the bonds that have snapped and to heal the wounds. I therefore most humbly appeal to the people and leaders of Maharashtra to abandon agitation and direct action and bend all their efforts to win back the confidence and goodwill of their Gujarati and other non-Maharashtrian countrymen. I am making this appeal entirely in my personal capacity and with nothing to support me but my faith in the cause of justice and in the good sense of my countrymen and their leaders.

I should like to address a few words to my Gujarati countrymen. I hope they have not misunderstood me or taken me to be partial or prejudiced. I seek the good of Gujarat as much as of Maharashtra. I am also aware of the depth of Gujarati feeling over the incidents in Bombay. But one expects a better understanding from them of the spirit of satyagraha. The misguided acts of a few should not create estrangement between whole communities. Gujaratis have to live with Maharashtrians as fellow-countrymen irrespective of what happens to Bombay. Moreover they are now going to have their own state and must turn all their attention to the tasks of reconstruction and consolidation. In this task they must have universal goodwill. The question of Bombay should be viewed in this new perspective now and reduced to its true proportions. The Gujarati fear of the Maharashtrian in the event of Bombay going to Maharashtra is to my mind an unhealthy symptom of linguistic distrust and every effort should be made to overcome it. The best way to do so is to endeavour to remove from the Maharashtrian mind the feeling of having been wronged. The Gujaratis too must have realised the keenness in Maharashtrians for Bombay, and they cannot be unconcerned in the danger to the nation if millions of its citizens are left with a feeling of injustice. In a family when a brother

sets his heart on something, and where there is nothing immoral in his demand, it is wise for another brother to yield. In any event the disputed goods remain within the family.

The Sikh Problem

I have just returned from a four-day tour of Punjab in which I visited Ambala, Patiala, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, Pathankot, Amritsar, Jind and Hansi. The tour was undertaken at the invitation of the Sarvodaya workers of Punjab in preparation for the forthcoming visit of Sant Vinobaji to the state. I feel happy to be able to say that everywhere in Punjab the message of Sarvodaya was received with deep interest, and I found Vinobaji's visit awaited with great hope and enthusiasm. Even though on the surface Punjab appears somewhat disturbed, deeper down the people, both Hindus and Sikhs, are genuinely religious. I have no doubt therefore that Vinobaji's visit will not only act as a balm to excited brows and torn hearts but also bring out and awaken the spiritual resources of these brave people.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my concern at the manner in which the government is handling the Sikh problem, particularly the agitation of the Shiromani Akali Dal against what they consider state interference in Sikh religious affairs. I am confident that the

Press statement released on March 20, 1959

heart of the Sikh community is sound and its patriotism undoubted. I feel further that even the Akali Dal is no more communal than similar organisations; properly handled, the Dal could be made into a powerful force for national integration and reconstruction. But one thing the Sikhs will never tolerate is outside interference in their religious matters. I do not wish to express an opinion either way, but when a specific charge has been made and a great section, if not the whole of the community is agitated, repression is not the answer. It was very wrong and unwise to arrest and imprison Master Tara Singh and his lieutenants. The plea that this was done to save the state from violence is ridiculous. Master Tara Singh has shown that he can control his followers, and it is significant that even after the great provocation of his arrest the Delhi procession was peaceful and orderly and no incidents took place in the state. But I am afraid that if the present policy of repression is persisted the patience of some may be tried too far.

Masterji's Statement

In a statement before his arrest Master Tara Singh had indicated that he was prepared to accept the arbitration of persons like Vinobaji and Rajaji. I should have thought that this would have been grasped as an opportunity to bring peace to a troubled situation. I cannot say that Vinobaji or Rajaji would agree to act as arbitrators, but it is helpful to know that Master Tara Singh is ready for such a reasonable solution. It is significant that even after Masterji's arrest the offer to accept arbitration was not withdrawn. A resolution passed by the conference held after the Delhi procession on March 15 appears to endorse Masterji's offer.

I therefore hope that Master Tara Singh will be released without delay and negotiations, either on the basis of the arbitration offer or on any other mutually acceptable basis, started. Our statesmanship is on trial in Punjab. I hope and pray it will pass the test.

Bilingual States

The question that is perhaps uppermost at present in the mind of Bengal is that of the status of Bengali in Assam. My personal view in the matter should be well-known because I have often expressed it in recent months. I do not accept the view that just because the states have been reorganised on a linguistic basis there should be in each state only one socalled state language. Wherever a substantial linguistic minority exists the language of that minority too should be given the status of a state language. This might involve administrative and financial difficulties, but that should be no reason for running away from what is just and proper. Any other course would lead to linguistic patriotism and the domination and arrogance of majority linguistic groups. If my suggestions lead once again to the creation of bilingual or even multilingual states I would regard that as a most welcome consummation.

Recent events in Jabalpur and Silchar have raised grave questions about the integrity of the Indian nation. I am not referring to the language or communal quarrel. It is not in the least surprising that in a community of 43 crores with all manner of differences there should be disputes, quarrels and conflicts. Even among blood-brothers quarrels take place. What gives serious cause for anxiety and throws the whole future of the country into doubt is that methods such as murder, loot, arson and rape are being used for the solution of disputes. If these "little civil wars," these barbaric methods are not abandoned, India cannot remain whole. And if India perishes none of its parts can live.

Let no one pretend that our differences, disputes and quarrels can be wished away as by magic.

The process of national integration is bound to be long and arduous. It has always and everywhere been so: none of the modern nations was created in a day. But let us remember that if we are to progress towards national integration and not disintegration, we all must renounce violence as a means of internal policy.

I BEG TO SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT ALL VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRESS SHOULD COMBINE TO LAUNCH A CITIZEN'S PEACE PLEDGE CAMPAIGN. EVERY ADULT CITIZEN SHOULD AS A MATTER OF NATIONAL DUTY TAKE THE PLEDGE PERSONALLY TO REFRAIN FROM USING PHYSICAL VIOLENCE FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ANY SOCIAL GOAL. I SUGGEST FURTHER THAT AS A TOKEN OF THE PLEDGE THERE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN EVERY HOME A *SHANTIPATRA* (A LITTLE BOX, POT OR ANY OTHER RECEPTACLE), AND IN ORDER THAT THE PLEDGE MIGHT BE REMEMBERED EVERY DAY ONE NAYA PAISA SHOULD BE DROPPED DAILY INTO THE *SHANTIPATRA*.

Shanti Patra

There must be no less than 8 crores of families in the country. That means that the daily proceeds of the *Shantipatra* could quite easily amount to as much as Rs 8 lakhs or Rs 240 crores a year! That money could be used, among other things, to raise a vast peace army. I am not suggesting that it is only money that is needed to build a peace army. But I am confident that if the peace pledge campaign becomes a mass movement there would be hundreds of thousands of young men prepared to risk their lives to save their country from internecine violence.

At present the pattern of police firing, with or without justice, upon excited mobs has become all too common.

Restoration of so called peace in this manner only signifies the victory of greater over lesser violence. Such a situation can never lead to the emotional integration of the various disputing groups of Indians. What then is the remedy for this dangerous situation? The remedy is twofold as I have just indicated. One, a citizens' peace pledge symbolised by the *shantipatra* in every home; two, raising a peace army. I cannot conceive of a simpler and yet more vital programme for the preservation of our nation.

Views have been attributed to Vinobaji which nobody with the least understanding of this man of God can believe. The resulting misunderstanding has caused much abuse to be heaped on his saintly head. It is not my purpose to come to Vinoba's defence, nor am I sure would he care to defend himself. He will continue to pursue unperturbed his path of truth, love and compassion—even if martyrdom faces him on the way. All I wish to say is that the cause of the Bengali of Assam is not served by behaving as if everybody was against Bengal and the Bengali. Neither abuse nor the knife-shaking of Durgapur is going to help. Nor does abuse prove anything. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi did not prove the assassin to be right.

Punjabi Suba

I hate to inflict this letter on you immediately after your return from a strenuous tour. I am writing in connexion with the Punjabi Suba agitation. As you perhaps know I am not a particular admirer of that idea, but have always taken the view that it would not be such a disaster as it is made out. In fact if the Punjabi-speaking Hindus had joined the Sikhs in making the demand it would have been irresistible. I might say here parenthetically that no one is sure what percentage of Hindu opinion in the present Punjab would oppose a Suba. I am sure that the people of Haryana Prant would be quite happy to unite with Delhi and some districts of UP to form a separate state, which in my opinion would not be a bad thing. U P is unmanageably large. But that is only by the way. Of the Punjabi-speaking Hindus, it is doubtful whether the Jats in the rural areas oppose it so vehemently as the Arya Samaji Lalas of the towns. However that is neither here nor there.

The partition of the present state might be undesirable from some points of view, but I feel absolutely convinced, despite all that has been said against it, that if Master Tara Singh dies and is followed by Sant Fateh Singh the disaster would be immeasurable. We are faced here with a choice between two evils, and I for one would choose the lesser one, i.e., Punjabi Suba. Hindu society nurses in its heart suicidal, disruptive, disintegrating forces. On one hand the best of Hindu thought is more catholic than anything known in the world, and, on the other the worst of it is more bigoted and narrow than perhaps any other human phenomenon except perhaps Zionism. Unfortunately it is the darker side of Hinduism

*Letter addressed to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, September 11, 1961

that seems to be on the ascendant at present. Sikhs are no more different from Hindus than the Arya Samajis are, and even now there are large numbers of families which as you know are both Sikhs and Hindus. I have always regarded Sikhism as one of the reformed branches of Hinduism. The tragedy of the death of Masterji and perhaps of Santji would I think divide the two communities as nothing else has done before, and this to my mind would be a far greater loss for India, from the point of view of national integration, than anything else I can think of.

Sikh Loyalty

I have been disagreeably surprised to find in talking to Hindus that they have a deepseated suspicion about the loyalty of the Sikh community to the nation. For that matter, I do not know to what extent other sections of the Hindu community could be said to be absolutely above suspicion in this regard. You have the DMK in Madras openly preaching separation from India. Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer tried to negotiate with the British and Mr Jinnah a separate and sovereign Travancore state. If the transfer of power had occurred under Conservative aegis I am sure they would have tried to cut up India into not three but 300 states, and our Hindu rajas, not to speak of the Muslim princes, would have been only too glad to play their game. I know that when the Samyukta Maharashtra movement was at its highest and you all were unyielding, there were Maharashtrian leaders who began to mutter about separation from India. I therefore think the Hindus should have more humility when they speak of Sikh "disloyalty." Loyalty to a nation is a rather slow process, and we in this country have to go far before we become a solid united nation.

Demand for a Commission

I therefore plead with you to bring a more flexible

attitude of mind to the question than you have shown hitherto. I find that there is a new proposal about appointing a commission, upon which Masterji would be ready to give up his fast. This opens up a new avenue of approach, and I hope that in exploring this avenue there will not be the same rigidity as has been shown on both sides till now. In this connection I would like to say that my own impression from the time I met Masterji in Dharamsala jail has been that when he talks of discrimination against the Sikhs he really means that they are not accepted as loyal citizens, on which ground alone their demand for Punjabi Suba is rejected. Talking to me, he never tried to make the point about discrimination in the services, etc. If they therefore insist on the terms of reference of the commission including the reference to discrimination for unfairness in this sense it is understandable.

National Language*

I feel I must raise my voice, however feeble, against the manner in which the Prime Minister is carrying on the language controversy since his return from abroad. It is a matter to be deeply regretted, as happened in the case of the states reorganisation issue, that the Prime Minister's manner of intervention often precipitates unnecessarily heated controversy. Controversy and debate are the food of democracy. But there are bounds beyond which these should not be carried on if the democratic way of life is to grow in a healthy manner. No one, whatever his views, would like to be called stupid. Moreover when the Prime Minister himself thinks it fit to use such language in a public debate, can it be wondered why marshals have to be called in to allow our legislatures to carry on their work with a medicum of decorum? The two things are not so unrelated as they might appear at first sight.

This however is the less serious aspect—though it is serious enough—of the Prime Minister's present role in this vital national debate. The more serious aspect is the deliberate manner in which the real issue has been confounded and clouded over. The Prime Minister seems to be hitting out against a shadow. For barring a few extremists nobody suggests that English and other foreign languages should be banished from schools. The vast majority of people in this country, including those who speak Hindi, would unhesitatingly agree with all that the Prime Minister has said about the importance of learning foreign languages to keep abreast of science and modern knowledge. They would even have no

*Press statement issued from Patna on October 7, 1962

objection to *compulsory* teaching of English as a language at the appropriate stage.

Study of Foreign Language

But no matter how important learning foreign languages might be none of them can become an effective and creative medium of education. There is general agreement that the medium of education must be the language of the child's environment. However desirable it might be for us to learn English, German and Russian the *medium* of education in this country must be the regional language. Education through a foreign language can only result in mediocrity and stunting of originality and creativity.

All that however is not the real issue. The heart of the present controversy is whether any period of time should be defined within which English could be given up as an associate, or interstate, language and Hindi *alone* could come to acquire that status. The Government of India proposes to fix no time limit, and has aroused strong and widespread suspicion not only among Hindi-speaking people but also among others who wish to see Hindi become the national language. The suspicion is that the absence of such a limit would release the centre from any pressing, and real, responsibility to take the necessary steps to make it possible for Hindi *ever* to assume the role of a national language. Already there is a deep and widespread feeling that the present unpreparedness of Hindi to take on that role is due not so much to obstruction from the South as to the failure of the Central Government to fulfil its obligations in that behalf.

Failure of the Central Government

For instance states that had already taken steps to make Hindi the medium of instruction at the university stage had to reverse gear just because competitive examinations for the central services continued to be held in

English. It was not expected that those exams would be held *only* in Hindi. But if Hindi was to be enabled to become the national language steps should have been taken to see that Central examinations were held *both* in Hindi and English. This is only one example of the lapse of the centre in this matter. Many more have been pointed out in the course of the present controversy.

For these reasons the plea for some sort of time limit has been strongly, and to my mind quite reasonably put forward. There is no need to be dogmatic about the length of time. Vinobaji's suggestion in this regard seems to be the wisest, namely that the non-Hindi-speaking states themselves should be left free to determine the period of time required.

Cool consideration of this central question is likely to be far more useful in settling the present national debate than general opinions on the wisdom of learning foreign languages.

Disservice to Hindi*

The Jana Sangh and Socialist members of Parliament could not have done a greater disservice to the cause of Hindi than by their extraordinary misbehaviour in the Lok Sabha the other day. There can be no question but that English, which has no roots in the life of the people of this country, cannot survive as its national language, and there is also no doubt that Hindi will take its place on the national level and the regional languages similarly in their different regions. English will of course continue to be studied for its own sake and as a language of international usage. For that matter one hopes other important foreign languages too would be studied in the future more than they are today. I do not imply that this all will happen automatically and that no effort will be needed. Undoubtedly much effort will have to be put in, of which there has been little evidence so far, particularly at the level of the Union Government. I have no doubt that Hindi would have been in a much better position today to replace English at the Centre if the government had been more alive to its responsibilities in that regard. It is good however to see that the Home Minister's bill endeavours to make up for past negligence.

Extremists on both sides of the language controversy will find much fault with Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's bill. But when soberly considered it should be conceded that the Home Minister has done his best to reconcile different views and carry out the directions of the Indian Constitution. It deserves the general support of the nation. Pressures no doubt will be brought to bear from many sides and the bill will undergo changes, but

*Statement published in *Janata*, April 1963

by and large it would have laid the foundation on which it should be possible to build rapidly.

Incidents in Lok Sabha

Reverting to the incidents of April 13 in the Lok Sabha, I should like to plead with all passionate partisans of whatever causes there might be that if they do not wish to destroy the delicate plant of democracy they must be more careful about the means they employ to achieve their ends. After all means *are* ends. Democracy cannot last and grow in the absence of tolerance and a spirit of compromise. Democratic ends cannot be achieved by undemocratic means. It is difficult to believe that the Jana Sangh and the Socialist Party are conspiring to overthrow democracy, but I regret to say their actions sometimes compel one to think so. I therefore hope that the leaders of both these parties will seriously consider the matter and take steps to remove public misunderstanding on this score.

Religion Versus Language

I must also express here my deep anxiety about the danger of mixing religion with language. Hindi has nothing to do with Hinduism. There are millions of Hindus who do not speak Hindi and many non-Hindus whose mother-tongue is Hindi. The question of Hindi must therefore be kept strictly apart from religious sentiment and such things as saffron robes. Incidentally as a Hindu I expect more exemplary behaviour from our saffron-robed preceptors than was witnessed on the floor of the Lok Sabha. May be the leaders of the Hindu religious orders and our Shankaracharyas should give the matter serious thought.

Finally I wish respectfully to salute the Speaker, Sardar Hukam Singh, for the great dignity, patience and humility with which he dealt with a most unpleasant situation and upheld the honour and authority of the house.

Language Bi...*

So far I had deliberately abstained from expressing any view on the language question, because I had felt, as I do still, that the more we talk about this matter the more complicated it becomes. And when politics is introduced into the discussion there is no end to the complications. Yet with the introduction of the Official Languages Bill in Parliament a moment has been reached when I feel impelled to raise my voice, not to join in the controversy but to make an earnest appeal. The fact that I speak for no party and have no interest to serve except that of the nation will I hope specially command my words to the leaders of all parties.

Unity in diversity has been universally recognised as being the outstanding characteristic of Indian history and society. But it would be dangerous to forget that this unity was evolved in the course of thousands of years by inculcating in the diverse peoples of this country the spirit of mutual tolerance and adjustment. Whenever an attempt was made to impose unity by force, it led invariably to disunity and disintegration. There is a serious danger of the same experience being repeated if in the name of national unity an attempt is made to impose an official language, whatever it be, upon unwilling sections of the people.

Coming from a Hindi-speaking state, I do not hesitate to say that the opposition to Hindi in the South would never have been so vehement if the Hindi enthusiasts had not been so impatient and had relied more on persuasion and tried quietly to propagate Hindi wherever people were prepared to learn it. This process might

*Press statement released from Patna on December 7, 1967

appear to be indefinitely long, but on deeper thought it might be found to be the shortest.

At the same time, if the advocates of Hindi had turned their enthusiasm and zeal to develop Hindi as fast as possible and to make it the official and intellectual language in the Hindi states in an effective and adequate measure, the chances of national acceptance of Hindi would have been greatly improved. While in both these respects considerable progress has been made it is still very inadequate and ineffective. To promote national unity and the cause of Hinni the Hindi states should also have made a serious effort to make every student learn at some appropriate stage another Indian language, preferably one of South India. Hitherto the progress made in this direction is not worth mention.

Official Language Bill

In view of these considerations I very warmly welcome the official Language Bill the Government of India has introduced in Parliament. As the Home Minister and later the Prime Minister have explained the bill in the very nature of things is a compromise between two extreme views. In the given circumstances nothing else was possible. Incidentally the bill inasmuch as it gives effect to the solemn assurances of Prime Ministers Nehru and Shastri, will go a long way to dispel the growing mistrust in the minds of the people of South India about the intentions not only of the Central Government but also of the people of the North. This added virtue of Mr Chavan's bill should be a strong recommendation in its favour.

It is deeply to be regretted that there is so much agitation against the bill in some Hindi states. I consider it a disservice to Hindi as well as to the cause of national integration. So I appeal in all humility to both the Hindi and non-Hindi states to join hands in supporting the Official Language Bill. I also respectfully beg Rajaji to withdraw his opposition and give the bill his blessings.

KASHMIR

Theft of Sacred Relic*

Shri Poorna Chandra Jain, Shri Ahad Fatmi and Shri Krishnaraj Mehta, who went to Srinagar on behalf of the Sarva Seva Sangh and the Shanti Sena Mandal, have returned after spending nearly a week in that city of turmoil. In their stay they met a number of people of different communities and persuasions and tried as dispassionately as possible to understand the situation there. Having heard their report and discussed the matter with them, I feel called upon to make a few observations for the attention of both the Government of India and the people at large.

First of all I should like to emphasise the remarkable communal harmony among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs throughout the anxious days since the theft of the sacred relic on December 27 and the public *deedar* on February 6. I am afraid this fact of harmony between the communities, has not been fully appreciated in India and abroad. In the face of this every sensible person in the world should regret that some leaders of Pakistan and its press tried to give the whole affair the colour of deep and intense communal ill-will and discord. I feel proud to be able to congratulate the people of Kashmir, irrespective of communities, upon their exemplary unity.

In view of the intense excitement which prevailed in the state it was remarkable that along with communal harmony the people were able on the whole to remain peaceful. The few instances of arson and rowdyism must be unreservedly condemned. It must also be regretted that the police had to fire on two occasions, causing a few deaths and many other casualties. The

*Statement published in *Sarvodaya*, Vol XIII, April 1964

popular demand for a judicial inquiry into the firing deserves the sympathetic consideration of the Government of India, which has already wisely conceded the demand for an outside judge to try the cases of those arrested for the theft of the holy relic.

Secondly, praise is due to Central Intelligence officers for acting so promptly and efficiently in tracing the stolen relic. It is regrettable that there was initially so much hesitation and delay in identifying the relic, and this unfortunately raised unnecessary doubts and worsened the situation in the state. It was therefore good that Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri went to Srinagar, where he handled the situation with wisdom, courage and foresight.

Kashmir Government

Thirdly, there is evidence that the Kashmir Government does not enjoy the confidence and support of the people of the state. This is a dangerous state of affairs and must be mended as soon as possible. The same kind of wisdom, courage and foresight are necessary to deal with the situation as were evidenced in the matter of *deedar*. No doubt every course that is open involves an element of risk. But the present course is fraught with greater risk. In determining the future line of action it would be advisable to consult informally all sections of public opinion in Kashmir and Jammu. I need not point out that formal and institutional expression of opinion, as through party-based elections, is often unrepresentative and misleading, particularly when civic freedom is strictly restricted either by law or actual practice as has unfortunately been the case even in many democratic countries.

Fourthly, any dispassionate study of events since the theft of the holy relic and its recovery and public display would establish the great and widespread popularity of Sheikh Abdullah. Any political settlement in Kashmir would therefore be inadvisable without him. Fair minded people in India and abroad have watched with

dismay the strange progress of the Sheikh's trial, which I am sorry to say is a blot on the otherwise bright record of Indian justice. Moreover Sheikh Abdullah has already been in detention or prison for nearly ten years. But he cannot be held prisoner indefinitely. Whatever the legal or other difficulties, statesmanship demands that the trial be forthwith ended and the Sheikh set at liberty. Only when he is free could a political approach be possible to him. Finally, in view of the emergence on a considerable scale of harmony and peace in Kashmir, it seems a very favourable moment for the Sarvodaya movement to turn its attention to that state and launch a well-planned programme of constructive work. Its extreme poverty and pervading unemployment cry out for widespread development of handicrafts and cottage and small-scale industries. Many of the peace volunteers who made their appearance in the period of turmoil could be converted into a stable and trained band of Shantisainiks. I hope the Sarvodaya movement is able to face up to the challenge.

Our Great Opportunity in Kashmir*

The story of Kashmir is an account of confused aims, unsure methods, insincere ideals. From the beginning Kashmir has been the Indian Prime Minister's concern. Yet when Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed from the prime ministership of the state and detained Mr Nehru came to know of the event just as any other Indian citizen did. That is only one example of the incredible manner in which the Kashmir question has been handled. The present ballyhoo over Sheikh Abdullah's statements raises the question whether the old story is not going to be repeated again.

After 11 years of dilly-dallying the Sheikh has been released at last. But again there seems to be no well-thoughtout policy behind this belated decision. Surprise and pain have been expressed at Sheikh Saheb's statements. Unless the gentlemen concerned have deliberately hidden their heads in the sand they could have saved themselves these emotional upsets. Sheikh Abdullah has said nothing that was not expected from him. Happily the one sane voice in the ruling party is that of the Prime Minister himself.

What after all is the substance of Sheikh Abdullah's statements? That the future of Kashmir has to be decided by the people of Kashmir, and that this must be done in such a manner that the dispute about it between India and Pakistan ends amicably. With a little imagination it was possible to see that this clear and principled stand of the Kashmir leader opened for India a wonderful opportunity which could be exploited to the advantage

**Hindustan Times*, April 20, 1964*

of all concerned. What is actually happening however is a parrot like reiteration of slogans which carry no conviction in dispassionate quarters.

One of these slogans is that the accession of Kashmir to India is final and irrevocable. The Sheikh has questioned that, and it is for impartial lawyers to decide the issue. But the vital point to keep in mind is that it is not by legal advocacy that a human problem like that of Kashmir can ever be settled. Indeed it was such a realisation that prompted the original promise of the Prime Minister to ascertain the wishes of the people.

At this point two further slogans are raised: the people of Kashmir have already expressed their will at three general elections; if the people of Kashmir are allowed to express their will this would be the beginning of the end of the Indian nation.

Both to my mind are baseless slogans. The elections in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest were neither fair nor free. If that has to be disproved, it can be done by an impartial inquiry and not just by official assertions. Delhi seems to believe that it can establish any fact it pleases by auto-suggestion.

I may be lacking in patriotism or other virtues, but it has always seemed to me to be a lie to say that the people of Kashmir had already decided to integrate with India. They might do so, but have not done so yet. Apart from the quality of the elections, the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was never made an electoral issue at any of them. If further proof was needed it has come in the form of Sheikh Abdullah's emphatic views, and he, to put it at the least, is as representative of the people as any other Kashmiri leader.

Lastly, if we are so sure of the verdict of the people, why are we so opposed to giving them another opportunity to reiterate it? The answer is that this would start the process of disintegration of the country. Few sillier things have been said in the course of this controversy than this. The assumption behind the argument is that the Indian states are held together by force and not

by the sentiment of a common nationality. This is an assumption that makes a mockery of the Indian nation and a tyrant of the Indian state.

Threats have been held out that should Sheikh Abdullah misbehave the law would take its course. The law has taken its course. The law has taken its course for 11 years and the issue remains unsettled. It is not likely to achieve more in future. It is remarkable how the freedom fighters of yesterday begin so easily to imitate the language of the imperialists.

The last and final slogans raised in the ballyhoo is that there is no Kashmir question at all, and that if there was one at any time it has been settled once for all. Kashmir is a part of India and that is a fact of history, they say. That I think is the worst form of auto-suggestion.

The slogan-raisers forget that almost half the State of Jammu and Kashmir is under the occupation of Pakistan. Has this been accepted as a settled fact? If so, when and where? If not, how is the issue of Kashmir settled except in the private thoughts of those who believe that "we shall keep what we have" and "they shall keep what they have"?

Secondly, the issue is still pending before the Security Council and UN observers are still posted in Kashmir. Thirdly, here is a leader of the stature of Sheikh Abdullah who clearly states that the issue has still to be settled.

Therefore, as a humble servant of this country, I plead earnestly that instead of trying to take shelter in a fool's paradise of our own making let us have the courage to face facts and deal with them on the basis of the ideals and fundamental principles which guided our freedom movement. After all Sheikh Abdullah has not said anything that shuts the door on a reasoned and amicable settlement. All he has done is to envisage the unity and integrity of the original State of Jammu and Kashmir and ascertaining the wishes of the people of the reunited state in a manner to be agreed upon. He has indicated that a plebiscite need not be the only way of

doing so and has mentioned free and fair elections as another. This is not a stand which does not provide a meeting ground for India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

A Grave Mistake

It was encouraging to find that the Prime Minister boldly affirmed in his reply to the foreign affairs debate his faith in Indo-Pakistani friendship, envisaging even some kind of a constitutional tie, and was generous enough to concede that mistakes had been made by both sides. Recent events have proved that the partition of India was a grave mistake and has failed to solve any problem. There is however now the incontestable fact of two sovereign nations.

But at the same time the history of the post-independence years has proved another incontestable fact, namely that neither India nor Pakistan can live and grow unless there is friendship and cooperation between them. The lack of such relations has among other things upset the power balance in South and Southeast Asia, depriving the subcontinent of the role which history and geography had destined it to play. The result was a tilt of the balance in favour of China, a very unhealthy state of affairs. The Kashmir question has to be viewed in this broad perspective.

The question whether settlement of the problem would establish friendship between India and Pakistan may be debated, but it cannot be denied that this would take us a long way towards that goal, as well as create international conditions that would necessarily promote that friendship. I fervently hope that our leaders have the vision and statesmanship that this historic moment demands.

The Need to Rethink*

My recent article on Kashmir has provoked a rather fierce controversy. That is good, because after the emotional catharsis tempers should cool down, allowing for a more reasoned approach to a question that has plagued the subcontinent for the last 17 years. There is urgent need for rethinking on this question, and all I did in my article was to plead for this. It is to be regretted therefore that most of those who thought it necessary to preach angry sermons to me on patriotism refused to look squarely at the truths I had drawn attention to.

Yet I have no desire to prolong this controversy, because I believe it would help if everybody concerned kept his own counsel for a while. But in recent days there have been some amazing statements revealing a dangerous state of mind. It seems necessary to deal briefly with some of these matters which cause anxiety and point to a constructive way out if possible.

When I wrote about the ballyhoo in my article I little imagined that there had been such a vast, organised attempt to work up a state of mind which was hysterical and closed to reason and intolerance to a violent degree of all dissent. The public temper in Delhi at the time of Sheikh Abdullah's arrival reminded one of the days when the Father of the Nation was sacrificed at the altar of a similar synthetic hysteria. Regrettably Parliament itself helped to create that spirit of violent intolerance: recall—to give only one example—the shouting down of Mr Frank Anthony.

A rather mortifying example of the mental state of

**Hindustan Times*, May 15, 1964*

some members of Parliament was provided by Mr A.P. Jain, president of the UP Congress and one time Union minister. He is reported to have said in New Delhi that there were men who held a different opinion from mine on Kashmir who had voluntarily imposed upon themselves "extreme restraint," but that "if provocations of the type that Mr Narayan is making continue their patience might be exhausted."

I have no idea what Mr Jain means by that threat; perhaps he and his friends would have me put away in prison. Personally I would welcome that as an opportunity to snatch some rest and do some reading. But the crucial point to ponder is that irate young men go about muttering about assassination if a person in Mr Jain's position utters threats in this manner?

The pity is that when I referred to this mass hysteria at a public meeting in New Delhi some friends in the Rajya Sabha turned it into an issue of personal security—I am in no need of protection—rather than give serious thought to the dangers of the situation that had developed. May I say with due respect that in order to remedy the situation members of Parliament might well begin by practising a little more patience and tolerance themselves?

Importance of Human Values

Of all the amazing statements made in the course of this controversy the one by 27 Congress MPs (including the secretary of the Congress Party and other important members) easily takes the prize. First, there was the astounding assertion of the primacy of law over moral and human values. As legislators the MPs should know the nature and limitations of law as they are making and unmaking laws, even amending the constitution, all the time. In human affairs law no doubt has an important role to play, but it has its limits. Morality and human values transcend the limits of law and take precedence over it.

Nor is it a question of "anyone's personal views of what is moral." It is not at all difficult to identify what civilization in this age considers moral and human. Mahatma Gandhi devoted his whole life to spiritualise politics. It is sad to find that in a decade and a half leaders—one hopes their number is limited—of the organisation he built have come to sneer openly at morality and humanism.

Coming to Kashmir, this is how they authoritatively summed up the position: "You can no more talk of self-determination in the case of Kashmir than in the case of, say, Bombay or Bihar." Further on they said: "After the Americans attained independence was any state allowed to exercise the socalled right of self-determination? Surely Congress MPs know better. Then why this deliberate obfuscation? Is the answer far to find?

Lest the public, which has a proverbially short memory, should be led to believe that the idea of self-determination for Kashmir was a creation of Jayaprakash Narayan and his ilk, let me try to put the record straight. When partition was agreed upon it was decided that what was known as British India would be divided according to Muslim majority and Hindu-majority areas without a referendum, and that in princely India the princes would have the option to accede to India or Pakistan. Thus there was no question of any referendum in Bihar or Bombay.

History of Partition

As to the princely states, the accession of the princes was to be final. So when Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir acceded to India that should have set the matter beyond doubt for all time, as indeed in strict law it actually did. But there was a snag: the accession had to be accepted. And it was precisely at that point that the idea of a referendum or self-determination in regard to Kashmir was injected into the course of events. After accepting the Instrument of Accession on October 27,

1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten, wrote the same day to the Maharaja as follows: "In the special circumstances mentioned by Your Highness, my Goverǹment have decided to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India. Consistently with their policy that, in the case of any state where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the state, it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir, and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people."

A few days later (November 2, 1947) Mr Nehru underlined in a broadcast the assurance given by the Governor-General in these clear words: "We decided to accept this accession and to send troops by air, but we made a condition that the accession would have to be considered by the people of Kashmir later when peace and order were established. We were anxious not to finalise anything in a moment of crisis, and without the fullest opportunity to the people of Kashmir to have their say. It was for them ultimately to decide."

"And here let me make clear that it has been our policy all along that where there is a dispute about the accession of a state to either dominion the decision must be made by the people of that state. It was in accordance with this policy that we added a proviso to the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir."

Later in the same broadcast the Prime Minister declared to all the world: "We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given, and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not, and cannot, back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people and we shall accept

their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster offer."

In view of this crystal clear position it is amazing that such frantic efforts should be made to cloud the issue.

At this point it might help to clarify matters to consider another variation of the theme, though this was not the theme of the 27 MPs. Briefly it is this: true, there was a proviso to the Instrument of Accession, but that has already been given effect to and there is nothing further to be done about it. The proviso was carried out, it is said, when the Kashmir Constituent Assembly adopted in 1956 a constitution which declared that "the State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of India." That was three years after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, but that may not be considered very important. The really important point is that a decision of the Constituent Assembly cannot be equated with a referendum, which the Prime Minister had solemnly pledged.

Statements of Sheikh Abdullah are bandied about to prove that he himself had accepted accession. But there never was any question about this. After the Maharaja's legal act of accession, the Sheikh and the National Conference endorsed and explicitly accepted accession, and on many subsequent occasions their acceptance was reiterated. All this is incontestable, the proviso remained and had to take effect. Neither the National Conference nor Sheikh Abdullah could take the place of the people of Kashmir, whose will had to be ascertained, and not the Sheikh's or that of the National Conference.

Still another argument is that since Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO and USA supplied it with arms and other things happened the situation became so transformed that the offer of a referendum stood no longer. But it is forgotten that it was not to Pakistan that the offer or pledge was given but to the people of Kashmir. There is no justification for punishing the Kashmiris for Pakistan's actions.

In view of all this it appears to me that the right and

constructive approach is not to deny Kashmir the right to self-determination, or to assert that the right has already been exercised, but to show rationally how impractical and imprudent it would be to exercise that right now.

The following considerations might be put forward: First, there is the hard fact of aggression by Pakistan, which it shows no intention of vacating; second, a referendum might have serious consequences for the minorities both in India and Pakistan; third, a referendum might lead to further disintegration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir; fourth, the effect of the foregoing would have serious consequences for India's defence. There may be other factors, but these four are weighty and reasonable and neither Sheikh Abdullah nor any other Kashmir leader would brush them aside because they are as much concerned with India's good as with that of Kashmir.

Search for Settlement

My humble plea is that we put aside all this heated controversy about the accession having been final and irrevocable and sit down with the Sheikh and discuss practical ways of achieving a settlement. If according to us the only way is for Sheikh Abdullah to accept the finality and irrevocability of accession we might as well send him back to prison; he will never agree to that position. But to find a mutually acceptable solution it is not necessary for either side to give up its position. The important thing is for each to understand that merely by asserting one's own position and sticking to it the problem is not solved. No matter how aggressively we affirm that Kashmir's accession to India is final and irrevocable the world does not accept it, the "Azad Kashmir" area remains under Pakistan, the ceasefire line remains, the two armies remain facing each other, the minorities in both India and Pakistan continue to live in fear, discontent in Kashmir simmers and might have to be put down by force. So what have we gained,

or hope to gain in the future, by our insistent unilateral assertion? On the other hand if Sheikh Abdullah continues to press for the right of self-determination and circumstances do not permit it to be exercised what good does it do to him or anybody else?

So let each hold on to his position, but put it aside and get down to brass tacks to find a practical solution. Let it be recalled that there were three referendums in Alsace-Lorraine, and now who cares to whom it belongs?

I do not think anybody knows what the solution can be. Yet a few positive things might be stated about it. One, that there must be an honest desire on all sides to find a solution. Two, it should be remembered, as an English statesman said, that nothing is settled unless it is settled right. Of course it is not easy to know what is right in a complicated situation, but one test may be that it gives satisfaction to all concerned. Therefore the third point about the solution is that it must be such as to satisfy India, the people of Kashmir and Pakistan.

Sheikh's Stand

Sheikh Abdullah's insistent stress on Indo-Pak understanding as a part of any solution of the Kashmir question has irked Indian public opinion, and many have read into it his predilection for Pakistan. This however is a complete misreading. Sheikh Abdullah sees, as everyone else should, that there could be no settlement if Pakistan were not a party to it. The Kashmir question came into being on account of Pakistan, and India made it a party to the dispute at the UN. Apart from Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah also sees that the future of both India and Pakistan depends upon whether they are friends or enemies.

This is a view that will not be seriously contested in this country, and it has the support of no less a person than the Prime Minister. In a courageous and statesman like speech in the Lok Sabha, in reply to the foreign

affairs debate, Mr Nehru was reported to have said that "he would have hoped that India and Pakistan would come together closer, even constitutionally, but that would annoy the Pakistan authorities." So he would content himself to declare: "There is no other way for us except to live in peace." When it is recalled that the speech was made at a time of intense communal feeling its courage and wisdom become still more impressive.

I might remark here parenthetically—though this is not the place for it—that the Prime Minister's speech was equally remarkable for its responsive approach to the inquiry made by the Prime Minister of Ceylon. I should add however that it is not for China to make a "proper approach" to us as the Prime Minister said. Now that both sides have been sounded, it is for the mediators, the six Colombo Conference powers, to make the proposal in a formal manner to both governments. That would amount to a mutually agreed amendment of the original Colombo proposals and enable India and China to meet at the conference table.

But to return to Indo-Pakistan relations and Kashmir. The reference by the Prime Minister to some kind of constitutional link between the two countries is particularly interesting in the present context. And it need not be assumed that Pakistan would always oppose such an idea. After all every country is concerned about its security and economic development. Can there be any doubt that a constitutional link between India and Pakistan would go a long way to guarantee their security as well as economic progress? Moreover the fact that Sheikh Abdullah is also thinking on similar lines introduces a fresh element of hope into the situation. So if rigid positions are kept out of the way there is every hope that a constructive approach will be agreed upon that might lead ultimately to a solution at once satisfying to India, Kashmir and Pakistan. Here is a task of statesmanship of the highest order.

Before concluding I wish to take a look at our secularism in relation to Kashmir. Apart from other considerations Kashmir is deemed of great value to us because we wish to hold it up as an example of our secularism. I wonder if the spokesmen of secularism are aware of the irony of the present situation. The same Kashmir that is supposed to be an example of Indian secularism has occasioned a nasty upsurge of Hindu communalism. It is not easy to discern this process because it is happening under the cover of nationalism. India being a Hindu-majority country, it is not difficult, as has been remarked by many observers, for Hindu communalism to trot out in the garb of Indian nationalism. Therefore it is all the more urgent for those who believe in a truly secular and composite nationalism to be on their guard.

What is meant by Kashmir being an example of Indian secularism? It means I believe that the people of India have given such proof of their noncommunal outlook that the Muslims of Kashmir, even though they are in a majority there, have freely decided to live with India, which is a Hindu-majority but secular country, rather than with Pakistan, which has a Muslim majority but is an Islamic state. But suppose we had to keep the Muslims of Kashmir within India by force. Would that also be an example of our secularism? The very question exposes its absurdity. And yet how wide-spread is the mentality today that in order to defend the secular basis of our nation we must keep Kashmir, if necessary by force, within the Indian Union!

I therefore wish most seriously to plead with the Prime Minister, the congress president and other Congress leaders to look carefully at the cancerous process that is taking place within their party. As things are moving there will soon be little to choose at least in this matter between the Congress and the Jana Sangh. Shallow and timid Congressmen feel that the Jana Sangh is stealing their thunder. But by and large people's minds are sound,

and they would really round Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—as they have always known him—if he were to give a clear and bold lead. And so would all the faint-hearted Congressmen who are eager to ride to victory on the communal wave. If some such event does not happen, I am afraid the secular base of our nation will be vitally damaged.

An Ambivalent Policy*

It is saddening beyond words to find the same old policy of confusion and ambivalence being pursued again in the case of Kashmir. Deeds do not seem to correspond with words. Even the words of different spokesmen appear contradictory. On one hand it is stated that there will be no change in the present status of Kashmir, and on the other that it will eventually be brought in line with the other states of the Union. Again, on one hand it is emphatically reiterated that we keenly desire friendship with Pakistan, and on the other we deliberately launch a policy that cannot but worsen the already strained relations. I think it is time the government made up its mind. The present policy of indecision and lack of direction and purpose is doing this country incalculable harm.

The question we must squarely face is whether the constitutional integration of Kashmir with India is more important in national interests than friendship with Pakistan and justice to the people of the Valley of Srinagar. Legal technicalities will not provide the answer. What is needed is a mature and realistic reckoning. So far as I can see the disadvantages of the present policy far outweigh the advantages.

Need for Emotional Integration

Let me take up first the issue of justice to the people of the valley. There has been no credible proof yet that they have freely accepted the legal fact of accession. Constitutional integration has little meaning in the

Press statement released on March 20, 1959

absence of emotional integration. In this age and time it is impossible to hold down by force any sizeable population permanently. If we continue to do this we cannot look the world straight in the face and talk of democracy and justice and peace. Nor on account of the historical circumstances can we shelter behind the internationally recognised limitations of the right of self-determination. Perhaps the most harmful consequences of the policy of forcible integration would be the death-knell of Indian secularism and enthronement of aggressive Hindu communalism. That communalism is bound in the end to turn upon the Hindu community itself and destroy it.

Indo-Pak Friendship

As for friendship with Pakistan, let us calculatedly determine how dearly we need that friendship. No country can afford to buy friendship at any cost. So let there be a reckoning of gains and losses. First of all let us be mature enough to understand that if we persist in our present Kashmir policy there can be no friendship with Pakistan. The leaders of that country have not left us in any doubt on that score. If we disbelieve them we shall have only ourselves to blame.

Here is the pricing of Indo-Pak friendship as it appears to me. First, if Pakistan turns hostile, as I fear it would if we persist in the policy of full constitutional integration, the defence of the country would become a hundredfold more difficult. Certain parts of it such as Assam, NEFA and Nagaland would be next to impossible to defend. Indo-Pak amity on the other hand would automatically result in large scale disengagement, thus strengthening considerably our defence capability. Our communications too would be automatically strengthened tenfold. As for the defence of Ladakh, I am sure any amicable settlement of the Kashmir issue would provide for this.

Second, both history and geography destined the subcontinent of India to play a key role in South and Southeast Asia. But as long as India and Pakistan

remain at loggerheads India's, as also Pakistan's capacity to manoeuvre in this area remains drastically restricted. No initiative taken by India singly can have the same value and attraction for the countries of this region as a joint India-Pakistan move. At present, they cancel out each other, creating a power vacuum which no country but China can fill effectively.

Third, what is true of the Southeast Asia is very largely true of the world. India's posture on the world stage is very considerably determined by its obsession with Kashmir and consequent relations with Pakistan. In the Afro-Asian world this quarrel between the two big Asian countries has led to a heavy cost in prestige, influence and diplomatic effectiveness.

Fourth, there is the great economic damage the quarrel is causing both countries. It is beyond doubt that the development of each would have been much faster had there been cooperation between them in the economic field.

The last, and in some ways the most disastrous consequence of the quarrel, is its human and moral cost and the alienation of peoples it threatens to bring about. If the quarrel continues the Msulims in India and the Hindus in Pakistan will continue to live under the shadow of suspicion and suffer severe spiritual unrest. The danger of communal rioting would be ever present. These conditions are sure to cause mass human degradation to both sides.

The political division of the subcontinent cannot hide the fact that the peoples of India and Pakistan are really *one* people. This is not the first time that India has been divided politically. But there had always been a feeling of oneness and identity among the people divided between kingdoms and republics. Today the Bengalis of West Bengal and East Pakistan are one people, irrespective of religion; so are the Punjabis. In like manner, the Bengalis and Punjabis and Sindhis and Pathans and Jats and Rajputs and others of both countries make up one single Indian people, distinct from all other peoples

of the world. States are passing shows, but the people are eternal. I would therefore consider this alienation of the people of India and Pakistan from one another to be the most disastrous consequence of the present quarrel.

This briefly is the balance sheet as I see it. Let logic and reason rather than childish emotion guide the debate and the ultimate decision.

Kashmir Question

I am aware that settlement of the Kashmir issue would not in itself establish firm Indo-Pak friendship, but it would certainly remove the greatest obstacle to it and create the necessary psychological conditions. I am also aware that friendship is not one sided. But I am convinced that friendship is as precious for Pakistan as for India, and the Pakistanis will be found to be as keen for it as we persuade ourselves to be.

A last word to the leaders of the government. At this critical moment in the country's life it is their duty to lead and not be led. The crippling fear of public opinion and party rank and file is only a reflection of the leadership's own weakness and division. It is for the leaders to shape public opinion and educate the back-benchers. If they fail in this they will do a disservice to the country in this hour of decision.

A Fresh Approach*

I suggest a fresh approach to Indo-Pak relations. Relations between India and Pakistan are on an entirely different footing from those between other countries. India and Pakistan are two different countires, two different states, but *they are the home of one single people*. I do not think that this basic truth has been fully appreciated either by Indians or Pakistanis. Let me say at the outset that partition, as the 17 years of post-independence history of India and Pakistan have conclusively proved, has been a complete failure. It has solved no problem but has created many more than existed before. Yet partition is a fact and has to be accepted. But the ill effects of the partition must be removed. They can be removed not by force, not by coercion, not by conquest. They can be removed only by love, by understanding, by cooperation. Happily in the last few months there seem to have been new psychological forces at work both in Pakistan and in India. Only this afternoon I was reading a statement by President Ayub Khan in the National Assembly of Pakistan. Again and again he emphasised the need for a *change of heart* on both sides. I wish to underline that. I do not think our dispute with Pakistan can ever be settled unless there is really a change of heart on both sides. I am not sure if a change of heart has taken place in Rawalpindi. But Rawalpindi has at least recognised the need for a change of heart, which is something.

I hope Delhi also has realised the need for a change of heart. If such a change takes place all these disputes which have assumed such gigantic proportions would be

*Speech delivered at a conference on June 29, 1964

immediately cut to size, and it would be possible to tackle and solve them. I do not wish to minimise the problems that face us. I am not saying that there is a magic wand which can be waved to solve all of them at once. Much patience and perseverence are required. Progress will be slow. If both sides decide that in their own interest they must find a way to live together in friendship and cooperation, their very economic, historical, geographical, political, social and cultural conditions would begin to operate in favour of those objectives. Of all the outstanding issues between the two countries the issue of Kashmir is the most important and the most difficult. But with a change of heart even Kashmir can be solved.

Need for Positive Approach

So far the dominant approach of both sides has been to concentrate on settling the issues in dispute. At one time there was a theory that a beginning should be made with lesser disputes, and as they were settled one by one the more difficult ones could be taken up. Thus by the time the two countries came to discuss Kashmir, a favourable psychological climate would have been created. This in a sense was a negative approach, and though it yielded some results I doubt whether it would take us much further. If for instance even the summit meeting were to plunge headlong into a discussion of Kashmir and there was no settlement this would prove a disaster for both countries. At present the attitudes on Kashmir in both India and Pakistan have become so ossified that public opinion might not permit sufficient manoeuvrability even to the summit. I am therefore suggesting a positive approach, that is an approach that goes behind the disputes. While admitting that Kashmir is the chief irritant I do not think that Indo-Pak relations are what they are on account of Kashmir. Kashmir is only a symptom of the disease. The disease is the deep-seated mutual distrust between the two countries. Each suspects the other of harbouring the blackest designs

against the other. The problem in Kashmir cannot be solved unless this distrust were removed. On its part the distrust cannot go by magic or make- believe.

President Ayub Khan called in one of his recent broadcasts for a change of heart and said that if there was such a change no dispute would remain unsolved. That was a wise statement, and now it is for both sides to get together to find out how a change of heart, in other words replacement of the distrust with trust, could be brought about. In my humble opinion this could be done not by harping on disputes and differences but by sitting down together to discover if there were any areas of common interest in which the two countries could agree to work together for their mutual benefit. I hold firmly that there are large areas of this kind. And if they are jointly explored and discovered and worked together the present cloud of distrust could be dispelled and a change of heart brought about. When that happens even an issue like Kashmir will not appear as forbidding as it does today.

I might add that it is not necessary to keep separate what I have called the positive and negative approaches. They could indeed be taken up together. But then failure to solve any dispute such as Kashmir should not be allowed to interfere with the search for common interests and fields of activity.

Common Defence

President Ayub Khan has revived his plea for common defence. India should give serious thought to that no matter how bristling with difficulties it might be. It might be pointed out that defence cannot be discussed unless Kashmir is settled. True. But at present each side looks at Kashmir from the point of view of its own defence. The issue would take on a different complexion when looked at from the point of view of common defence.

The question of defence is linked with that of foreign

policy. There too, in spite of the apparent wide differences between nonalignment and alignment, I do not think it would be impossible to reach an understanding, particularly when both alignment and nonalignment are changing their substance.

Other areas of interest are obviously industry and commerce and communications and freer movement of peoples from either side. If those areas were explored and agreements reached in regard to them, so that even advisory joint councils were set up, the working of these councils for a couple of years or so might go far in creating mutual trust and understanding. That should help in the settlement of such disputes as might still be outstanding or might arise in the future.

In the last few months I have from time to time spoken about Kashmir and have been roundly abused for what I have said. The press has attacked me. Political leaders have attacked me. Members of Parliament have attacked me. Twentyseven Congress members of Parliament issued a statement attacking me. I have received in this period I do not know how many abusive letters—with the filthiest unimaginable abuse. I have even been threatened.

I do not claim that I am wiser than the rest of my countrymen. I do not claim that I have a readymade solution for this problem. But let me emphasise that no problem which involves human beings—the children and the future generations—can be solved in a legalistic manner or by force. It may appear today that the Chinese Communists have solved the problem of Tibet. But I am convinced that the day is not far off—I may not live to see that day—when the people of Tibet will regain their freedom and Tibet will become an independent country and be admitted into the comity of nations.

Dangerous Frame of Mind

I have been abused most of all for saying that the problem of Kashmir is a human one. No abuse, no

criticism, no argument has convinced me that there was need to change a single word of what I have said. A very dangerous frame of mind is being created in our country. We are beginning to think like a big power. If there is a difficult problem we think the easiest way to solve it is by using force. If there is trouble in Kashmir, if there is difference of opinion in Kashmir, we say we shall rule Kashmir by force. And I have heard responsible people say in Delhi that no Kashmiri has yet been known to die for a cause. They therefore think their policy of force will have easy success.

But what about Nagaland? There also the same philosophy of force has caught hold of our minds. At least the Nagas have given proof that they can die for a cause, and yet in the ultimate analysis it is on force that we wish to rely whether in Kashmir or Nagaland. I think this is a self-destructive philosophy and runs wholly counter to all that our own movement for independence stood for.

The Sarvodaya movement has a special responsibility in this matter because if the present trend of thought in the country is not checked it would end up eventually repudiating Mahatma Gandhi and all he lived and died for.

Kutch Agreement

It was but natural that the executive of the Congress Parliamentary Party should have endorsed the Kutch agreement. But what is more important is that the clarifications made by the Prime Minister at the meeting should dispel finally whatever doubts might have lingered in the public mind. It may not succeed in persuading those opposition leaders who have been unreasonably condemning the agreement. But their influence, at least in this matter, seems to be extremely limited. Happily there are also opposition leaders who despite minor objections have expressed their broad approval.

To my mind the agreement, far from being a surrender in any manner, is a diplomatic triumph for the government, particularly for the Prime Minister. He has not only carried out to the full his commitments to Parliament in this matter but has also revealed his inner resources of moral strength. This should prove deeply reassuring to the people of this country, who have felt depressed and lost in the past few months.

Deeper Significance

There are however aspects both of the public and official mind on this question which cause anxiety to a person like me. The Kutch accord has for me, as I had said earlier, a deeper significance than being merely designed to settle a petty border dispute. I look upon it in the first place as opening up great possibilities of achieving ever-widening accord between the two countries and in the second place as an object lesson in peace-making.

But neither the people nor the government seem to

look at it in that manner. In fact statements, particularly about Kashmir, were made almost on the morrow of the accord which dampened somewhat the hopes of growing Indo-Pak understanding. There have been other statements expresssing the fear, and seeking assurance, that the present agreement should not set a pattern for the future. There has also been a controversy on whether the dispute is only about the border or also about territory. The government has shown anxiety to allay these fears, as if it had done something in the present case that was not honourable. At the same time the Prime Minister has again offered a no-war compact to Pakistan.

Past Agreements

To me there seems to be little logic in all this. In this regard what puzzles me is the government's reluctance to place before the public past policy decisions and facts about previous agreements. After all none of the international disputes in which our country is at present involved has arisen within the lifetime of the Shastri Government: it has inherited every one of them from the past. The Prime Minister rightly told his party executive that each dispute has its own history. But then the facts of that history should be squarely faced.

For instance the history of the Kutch dispute dictates that if it is not settled by mutual negotiation it would have to be referred to an impartial tribunal, and that the dispute was admitted to relate both to demarcation of the border on the ground and to "exchange of territorial jurisdiction" (1959 agreement) or to exchange of territory "in adverse possession of the two governments" (ground rules for border 1960). It is true that India never accepted the territorial claims of Pakistan in this area, but it was admitted in joint documents (as quoted above) and authoritative statements, such as that of Prime Minister Nehru, that there was a territorial dispute too. In view of these facts of history it is difficult to under-

stand the official postures taken on this question and the controversy around it.

As for the present agreement setting a pattern for the future the facts of history have again predetermined the issue. The 1959 accord signed by the present Foreign Minister and Gen Shaikh laid down that:

> Both governments reaffirmed their determination to resolve border disputes by negotiation and agreed that all outstanding boundry disputes on the East Pakistan-India border and the West Pakistan-India border, raised so far by either party, should, if not settled by negotiation, be referred to an impartial tribunal for settlement and implementation of that settlement by demarcation on the ground and by exchange of territorial jurisdiction if any.

In view of that unambiguous agreement it is puzzling to find the Prime Minister being so wary and noncommital about it. I am sure he is incapable of ever wanting not to honour past international commitments; but then he must clearly tell the nation what they are and how were they to be honoured instead of vaguely talking about every dispute having its own history.

No-War Pact

As for disputes relating to other matters than the border there is of course no mutually agreed procedure for settlement. But if they too have to be peacefully settled the present agreement cannot be irrelevant. I have said above that it teaches an objective lesson in peace-making. It has to be accepted as an axiom, if war is to be eschewed and peace preserved, that peaceful ways must be found and used for settling international disputes. Then alone could an international order founded on the rule of law gradually emerge from the present chaos.

It is for this reason that I see little logic in the different positions taken today. On one hand we seem to be apologetic about the procedure we have agreed to, namely

that of international adjudication, and on the other we reaffirm our desire to reach a no-war agreement with Pakistan. If this no-war offer were not to be reduced to a mere slogan, and an irritating one at that, we must state as a corollary that we are prepared to agree to commonly evolved procedures for settlement of all disputes, present and future, between our country and Pakistan. But this is precisely where we tend to be vague and evasive.

When the Prime Minister in his recent eloquent broadcast to the nation declared that he stood unreservedly for peace he was expressing the deepest convictions of the Indian people. And yet only the other day this country stood on the very brink of the abyss from which only providence in the form of Prime Minister Wilson was able to save us.

The Fight for Peace

It is not enough to stand for peace. We must work for peace, fight for peace. War, as the famous UNESCO declaration says, begins in the minds of men. It is there above all that we must carry on the fight. Peace is not possible without truth, just as no war is possible without lies. In the Mahabharata even Dharamraj felt compelled to take recourse to them. If the people of India are told day in and day out that Pakistan is doing all the mischief, and the people of Pakistan are told that India is the villain of the peace, war between them would be unavoidable. But when someone tells the truth he is supposed to be "helping the enemy."

The search for peaceful ways to settle international disputes is a vital part of the fight for peace. It has not proved a barren search, and mankind has already discovered and adopted a few clearly defined means of pacific settlement of disputes. India, as also Pakistan, has already accepted these means as a signatory to the UN Charter, Chapter VI of which states:

The parties to any dispute, the continuance of

> which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all seek a solution by negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice. (Article 33.1)

Let India and Pakistan jointly announce that hereafter they will strictly adhere to these means and apply them to every dispute between them, including Kashmir. Only then will they be able to turn their backs on the abyss, disengage their armies, reduce their military burdens and their pathetic dependence on foreign aid. In short only then will they be able to sign a no-war compact and build a powerful bastion of world peace in Asia.

Massive Infiltrations in Kashmir*

I have watched with dismay the violent course of recent Pakistan policies towards India culminating in massive infiltrations into Kashmir across the ceasefire line in an effort to spread subversion and sabotage.

The plea that Pakistan has nothing to do with these activities and that they are the concern solely of "Azad Kashmiris" is unworthy of any government which wants its bona fides accepted by the world.

It is the plain duty of the Government of India under these conditions to eliminate this threat from Pakistan by all means at its command, and I fully support the measures that have been taken to this end.

It is a matter of deep regret to me that the promise contained in the Kutch agreement of a new beginning in the settlement of Indo-Pakistani diputes by the method of peaceful negotiation has been wantonly cast aside by Pakistan's adventurist action in Kashmir, and I recognise that the cause of friendly relations between the two countries has received a major setback.

At the same time I am convinced—no matter how realistic it may appear now—that if India and Pakistan are to avoid self-destruction they must return to the path of conciliation. The interests of both countries demand a relationship based on trust and good neighbourliness.

This relationship can only emerge from a mutual readiness to settle all outstanding differences in a spirit of justice, cooperation and mutual accommodation. This objective cannot be achieved without a reciprocal effort from Pakistan, and I venture to appeal to all men of goodwill in that country to help in this endeavour by

*Press statement released on August 5, 1965

urging restraint on their government.

In conclusion I do earnestly hope that the Kutch agreement, which for the first time in the tragic history of Indo-Pak relations has opened the way to an equitable and honourable settlement of a dispute, will not be repudiated by either party, for in that case both would either drift willy nilly into a disastrous war or their festering sores would eventually lead to their national debilitation and decay. It is clear that the beneficiary of either of these eventualities can only be China.

Pakistani Aggression in Kashmir*

I had not thought it necessary to add anything to my initial statement expressing my full support of the government's action in dealing with Pakistan's aggression in Jammu and Kashmir. In this period the country has been most ably led with clarity and firmness, and our armed forces have been fighting valiantly under brilliant leadership, all discontents and agitations have been voluntarily muted, all political parties have forgotten their differences and rallied behind the Prime Minister, the people have been calm, unaffraid, united and determined to do their best. There was nothing that needed to be said by a private citizen like me.

But now a moment has come when I feel I must speak out, not to my country and my people but to the people and Government of Pakistan and to the peoples and governments of the world.

I speak as one who believes in peace and conciliation and abhors war. Even outside this subcontinent something is known about my efforts and the efforts of my colleagues in the India-Pakistan conciliation group to bring the two countries nearer in friendship and cooperation to the mutual benefit of both and the benefit of the whole of Southeast Asia. It is also known that we persisted in our efforts even at the cost of considerable misunderstanding in our country. I therefore hope my words will not be brushed aside as partisan propaganda.

The conditions set by Pakistan for a ceasefire and withdrawal of forces imply that Pakistan considers it within its right to wage war against India if India does not agree to a plebiscite in Kashmir. This indeed is an

*Press statement released on August 5, 1965

extraordinary claim and needs to be looked at closely.

The world takes it for granted that Pakistan has a right to interfere in Kashmir because it is a Party to the dispute. This is not so. At any rate it is not so any longer.

Kashmir's Accession

It is necessary to recall that originally neither India nor Pakistan had any rights in Kashmir, though both had their undoubted interest in the future of the state. But according to law the future of the state was in the hands of Maharaja Hari Singh and his people. Pakistan however lost its patience and attacked the defenceless state with no other intent than to attach the territory. The Maharaja, with the full support of Sheikh Abdullah and the people of Kashmir, acceded to the Indian Union.

Since that day India became a party to the issue in Kashmir. Pakistan had nothing to do with Kashmir in terms of the settlement between the British Government, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. In fact it was India itself which made it a party in the naive hope that the Security Council would name the aggressor and discipline it. But let it be clear that even then the only sense in which Pakistan was made a party was in the capacity of an aggressor, with no other responsibility or hand in the matter than to vacate the aggression.

Not only was the original aggression not vacated for one reason or another but Pakistan has now committed another and still more massive aggression in Kashmir, again with the same intent as before, namely to occupy the state by force. By this deliberate and blatent action Pakistan has forfeited whatever place it had obtained in the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan has feigned deep concern for the wishes of the people of Kashmir. Was its aggression in 1947 and the present one in accordance with the wishes of the people? Does anybody believe that if the Pakistanis had succeeded in annexing the state they would have

invited the UN, withdrawn their forces and asked the Secretary-General to ascertain the wishes of the people? It is not known whether they have held a plebiscite in what they call Azad Kashmir. It is clear then that the plebiscite plea is only a smokescreen behind which Pakistan has been making tireless plans to annex the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Therefore Pakistan and the world should understand now that recent events have established the truth that if there is any issue now in Kashmir it is between the people of Kashmir and the Government of India. Further, there should be no doubt that the present leaders of India would settle the issue to the satisfaction of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. India is a democracy, and if only Pakistan were to keep its hands off nothing but the wishes of the people would prevail in Kashmir as in the rest of India.

Finally, let me say that I shall continue to believe in India-Pakistan conciliation because both countries must live as friends. But if Pakistan wants war with India because it is denied a hand in the Kashmir issue conciliation must wait until better sense prevails.

British Socialists and Kashmir*

Vicky has drawn a poignant cartoon invoking Gandhi to shame India. He has every right to do so. But does that help? If you throw Gandhi in our face and we invoke Christ against the Christian nations will it lead anywhere? Was it not an English poet laureate who spoke poignantly of the progress made 2000 years of Marx? Had Thomas Hardy lived he would no doubt have talked of even more horrible things than poison gas. If Asia, or India, keeps taunting the Christians about loving their enemy, would that stop America or Britain or France from manufacturing ghastly bombs and God knows what other unspeakable horrors?

My answer to Vicky, not by way rhetoric at all, is that strange as it may sound Mr Shastri is much more conscious of Gandhi than Wilson or Johnson or de Gaulle of Jesus Christ. Many Westerners, who never liked Gandhi anyway or understood him, have persuaded themselves that Gandhi is dead and buried in India. They are utterly mistaken. Gandhi still lives within us. But the path he treads is a difficult one, and it will take much time for us, or for that matter any nation, to follow it with success. The question involved is not of individuals following Gandhi, but of the government. Reinhold Niebuhr has shown how man can be moral, but how difficult it is—he would say it is impossible—for society to be moral.

If British socialists are content to limit their horizons to their national interests, as they seem to be doing, I have nothing to say. It is possible that they find it more profitable to have Pakistan on their side than India. After

*Unpublished material

all Pakistan is an ally in CENTO and SEATO, and the rulers of Pakistan were ranged against the Indian freedom movement and were on the side of the British.

British Socialists

But should British socialists want to apply their socialist principles to their international dealings they might as well begin to think in terms of undoing the mischief of 1947.

The partition of India solved no question at all as the sad history of Indo-Pak relations testifies. Nationality or nationhood has nothing to do with religion, and socialism is the first to affirm that. At the time of partition the Congress Socialist Party as might be recalled was dead opposed to partition and would have opposed it in AICC had not Gandhiji advised us not to "divide the house." Gandhi himself utterly opposed it, but he was reluctant to disown those whom he had raised to the position of national leaders. He might have done that, as he said, if he had been ten years younger. Partition was based on the pernicious principle of religion determining nationality. It was a pity that was done under a socialist government. Mr Atlee might have however found the pressure of the reactionary British administration in India too powerful to resist. But since that fateful event of Partition it should have been the job of the British socialists not to feed religious fires but attempt to bring sanity to the subcontinent and bring the divided parts nearer. But they have done just the opposite.

Pakistan's Claims

Pakistan is considered to have a claim to the valley of Kashmir solely because it is overwhelmingly Muslim. The British Government, with the powerful support of Mr Jinnah, laid down the law that the Indian princes, were free to choose their future after the lapse of British paramountcy. The Indian Congress resisted that view

and insisted that the voice of the people of the Indian states rather than the princes should prevail.

Socialism should have come to the support of that democratic principle. But the government stood by the letter of the law, and even though the princes were mere puppets in the hands of the Viceroy and had no real power they were given the sole power to determine the future without any reference to their subjects. Mr Jinnah stood wholeheartedly for the rights of the princes, not because he was in love with them but because he had hopes that by intriguing with them (indeed the intrigues were already on) he could further dismember India, or the "rest of India" as the phrase ran at that time.

The British socialists, against all the principles of democracy and socialism, were a party to that conspiracy to essay the dismemberment of India, and thus keep the divided country at their mercy. The colossus of the North had not risen above the horizon yet, though it could not have taken much thought for a well informed government to realise that the position of Generalissimo Chiang kai shek was becoming more and more untenable. To have deliberately effected not only the great partition of the subcontinent but also sown the seeds of numerous other little partitions in the hope of exploiting the divisions for British nationalist interests was, to say the least, not being very faithful to socialism.

Kashmir

The remarkable thing however is that after vesting the princes with unlimited power, except for limitations regarding contiguity and viability, the British socialists, or rather the British Labour Party—except such rare individuals as Nye Bevan who said when he visited India that it had a cast-iron case on Kashmir—from the very beginning started to undo the decision taken by the Maharaja of Kashmir. (It is well known that the Maharaja wanted to opt for independence and was sending feelers to both sides.) So illogical was the position of

the British Labour Government that when in 1947 Pakistan lost patience and invaded Kashmir—India was nowhere in the picture yet—that government refused to call it aggression and condemn Pakistan for it.

The Maharaja of Kashmir then decided to accede to India and seek military aid. The accession was accepted and military aid rushed. Mahatma Gandhi was alive and he gave approval to that act of succour. The British Government however turned a blind eye to the accession and picked upon Mr Nehru's highminded pledge that when the aggressor withdrew and normalcy returned the wishes of the people of Kashmir would be ascertained. Mr Nehru was not bound under the terms of the Independence of India Act passed by the British Parliament to give any such assurance, and indeed it has no status in international law. But since then the British Labour Party, along with the Conservatives, have been harping on the promised referendum, which was not required by law, and ignoring the decision of the Maharaja, which has full validity in law. The only reason that they have been doing so is that their thinking is based on communal philosophy rather than on socialist philosophy.

I am not saying that the Kashmiris should be denied the right to decide their future. Indeed I am still trying to tell my government and my people that the issue in Kashmir has to be settled between the leaders and the people of Kashmir and India. But on what ground could Pakistan demand that it be allowed to take a hand in the settlement apart from the fact that it is a Muslim nation? What right has Pakistan not only to press the issue peacefully but also to wage war against India? And how can a socialist government support all that as Mr Wilson appears to be doing? By encouraging political aspirations based on religion the British socialists are sowing the seeds of disaster, and its fruits will be gathered neither by British nor by Pakistan but by China.

Need for Confederation

If British socialists therefore wish to play a constructive role in this part of the world they should set their sights on the far distance and work out the steps leading to the goal. For the stability of this area, for its growth and development, for restoring geopolitical balances in this part of the world, and for democracy and socialism there is no alternative to the willing partnership of the independent, sovereign states of the Indian subcontinent whether you call the partnership a confederation, association, union, community, concord or whatever you wish. Will the socialists of Britain have the courage and the wisdom, will they be faithful enough to socialism, to see this and desist from seeking petty advantage through petty intrigue? They will find the Indian socialists more than willing to cooperate. Let them remember that anything that divides the peoples of the world is reactionary, anything that brings them closer is progressive. That is the human task of this atomic age.

Kashmir and Its De-accession*

Many who were critical of me are quite pleased with my present stand. Some of them are saying that they feel happy that sense has finally dawned on me. I do not grudge anyone such satisfaction, nor am I one who believes in his own infallibility. A man like me who has little stake in life has no reason not to own his mistakes and wrong doing.

But in the present context while I stand unreservedly by whatever I have said since August 5, I do not take back anything said before.

Recent events should not be allowed either to cloud our vision or hide the truth from us. The little war we have just fought was no doubt imposed on us, and a bigger war might again be forced on us. In such a situation we cannot act otherwise than fight with all our moral and material strength. Nevertheless there are certain basic truths that we should never forget, not even in the thick of the battle.

Both the President and Prime Minister have in their recent pronouncements expressed their abhorrance of war. That I believe is also the sentiment of the people of this country. Those who abhor war are expected to do their utmost to avoid war; in other words they should do everything consistent with national interest to settle every dispute peacefully. All I said or did before Pakistan's renewed aggression in Kashmir was in pursuit of a peaceful settlement with Pakistan. That such a settlement did not come about is not entirely due to Pakistan. There is a trend in this country today to put the whole blame for the Kashmir problem on Pakistan.

*Unpublished material

To any objective eye however India's blame is not inconsiderable.

Constitutional Integration

If this truth is disregarded at the present moment, I am afraid a true settlement might again escape us. Without going further back into the tragic history of Kashmir, I am not yet persuaded that it was wise to have abruptly launched the constitutional integration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with India. I had said so at that time and say it today. I am not sure that if that had not been done friendly relations with Pakistan would have been established and the Kashmir question would have been honourably and equitably settled. Yet it was necessary in the interest of peaceful settlement to leave no stone unturned.

Secondly, it is important to remember that no decision imposed by war can be stable unless it is also intrinsically right. So even after two victorious wars a lasting settlement might not be effected if justice is not made the basis of peace. Germany is an excellent example. In two successive wars Germany was decisively defeated, yet the "German problem" remains unsolved. Germany remains divided, occupation armies continue to remain, the "fear of Germany" still remains deep, not only in the East European countries but also in stout Russian hearts.

Those who consider peace efforts to be either due to weakness or foolishness should therefore understand that even after war the task of establishing an honourable and just peace has to be faced. It should be obvious that in that case no effort should be spared to reach a peaceful settlement.

Pakistan seems to have decided to give up the path of peace with India. There could be no other explanation of its deliberate aggression in Kashmir in the wake of the Kutch agreement which had, after many years of quarrelling, created a cordial atmosphere conducive to a peaceful

settlement. There was then a possibility of resuming the talks about Kashmir. But the situation has changed radically. This country cannot be forced at gunpoint to talk with anybody. It is not only refusal to talk that the radically changed situation enjoins upon India; our whole thinking on the question must be re-examined and the world should be persuaded to see it in the proper light.

Pakistan's Role

Until August 6, 1965, India, though firmly holding that Jammu and Kashmir was rightfully a part of its territory by virtue of Maharaja Hari Singh's accession, recognised Pakistan's interest in the matter and was prepared to talk with Pakistan for the sake of friendly relations. And because of the pledge given to the people of the state and to the world, India was more concerned with the wishes of the people. Thus there were three parties to the talks.

But now, when Pakistan has taken recourse to war and wants to force India to the conference table, there can be no response from this side other than that given by the Government of India. So far as Pakistan is concerned, the Kashmir question is closed. Now there are only two parties to the dispute: the Government of India and the people and leaders of Jammu and Kashmir. The world, whatever may be its sympathies, would have nothing left to say once it has been convincingly shown that the people of Kashmir and the Government of India have mutually reached a settlement. Even Pakistan will have nothing to say.

Two General Elections

Our plea that two general elections in Jammu and Kashmir have put the seal of the people's approval on the accession of the Maharaja, admittedly made under duress, does not carry conviction in the world. Why? Because

during those elections the most popular Kashmiri leader, Sheikh Abdullah, was in prison as were many of his colleagues; there were complaints of intimidation and unfair practices to win votes for the ruling party. It would be running away from the facts if we deny this. Therefore the issue has still to be settled so far as the people of the state are concerned.

A plebiscite is however out of the question, and I hope that the Plebiscite Front will have no serious objection to dropping it. Some other way may be adopted. Negotiations can be one of them. Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg should be set at liberty and the government should hold talks with them.

The Shiekh and his followers should also realise that the situation has changed since they went on Haj. Pakistan had committed aggression in Kutch, and before the ink on the agreement had dried it committed a much graver one in Kashmir. When the ceasefire took place Pakistan renewed its threat to fight if India was not prepared to talk on Kashmir. If these conditions continue not only will Pakistan not be allowed to take a seat at the parleys but also no solution involving withdrawal of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir or of any part of it is possible. It would be rather naive to believe that Pakistan would honour a neutral status for Kashmir. On the contrary the leaders of Pakistan have announced that they would never be prepared to accept an independent Kashmir. In other words Pakistan should either be made a gift of the Kashmir Valley or it will take it by force. It is not interested what the status of Jammu and Kashmir should be, whether it should be a part of India or an autonomous or independent state.

In these circumstances there could be no question of the neutrality or autonomy or independence of Kashmir. Therefore no solution which implies the de-accession of Kashmir is practicable any more and can be countenanced. This step would be an invitation to Pakistan to take over the state. India can never accept this.

The Future of Indo-Pak Relations

Two rays of hope have recently appeared in the darkening Indo-Pakistan skies: one, Mr Kosygin's statement that he would spare no effort to save the Tashkent accord; the other the exchange of greetings between the Prime Minister and President Ayub Khan as her plane flew over West Pakistan. Every effort must be made to see that these rays do not fade but that they multiply and spread to light up the entire subcontinental sky. This calls for fresh initiative from each side. It does not seem possible for President Ayub Khan, faced with powerful opposition, to take any helpful step. The initiative clearly is with India, and to fail at this critical moment and wait on events, may destroy all chances of reviving the drooping spirit of Tashkent.

Two possible initiatives occur to me. If Indo-Pak relations, which seem at the moment to have got derailed, are to be put back on the Tashkent track it is imperative that the Prime Minister and President Ayub Khan meet as soon as possible. Instead of waiting for someone else to arrange the meeting Mrs Indira Gandhi should herself invite the President to New Delhi. She has now had the advantage of talks with Mr Kosygin, who must have told her all that had been left untold in the Tashkent declaration. She has also had the benefit of talks with Mr Johnson and Mr Wilson. These talks should have given her the necessary background for a fruitful down-to-earth talk with the Pakistan President. Until the two leaders meet and review the whole position and reach broad agreement as to the direction to be given to Indo-Pak relations meetings of ministers would only aggravate the sense of frustration growing on both sides.

Summit Meeting

There is a view that Pakistan must behave better before there could be any thought of a summit meeting. That to my mind is to put the proverbial cart before the horse. It is precisely in order that the rapid deterioration in Indo-Pak relations may be arrested that I am making the above suggestion.

There is another view that a meeting at that level cannot be conceived without careful and adequate preparation. As a general proposition that is no doubt true. But in the given situation it is impossible for ministers or officers to "prepare"for anything. The Pakistani representatives would block every effort to discuss any question of common interest by simply insisting that the Kashmir question be first taken up and settled. Once again it is precisely to resolve every deadlock that a meeting between the Prime Minister and President Ayub Khan is suggested.

How can the two leaders resolve the deadlock? They will surely not be able to *solve* the Kashmir question. No solution of that question is indeed possible at any number of summit meetings so long as the present approach of Pakistan to it continues, namely that Kashmir must be settled before any progress is possible towards Indo-Pak friendship.

A New Approach

The Tashkent meeting was intended to resolve this very deadlock. It had lasted 18 years and had finally led to war. That war too had failed to settle anything. Clearly a new approach to Indo-Pak relations had to be found if the "welfare of the 600 million people of India and Pakistan" was to be assured. The historic significance of the Tashkent meeting was that it succeeded in finding a new approach. The agreement signed there placed in the forefront not the issue of Kashmir but the need for "understanding and friendly relations" between

the two countries and viewed Kashmir "against that background."

Had Pakistan's stand at Tashkent been that without prior settlement of Kashmir, there could be no question of friendship with India there would have been no agreement at all. But the fact that there was an agreement, even though a Kashmir settlement was not even distantly visible, clearly implies that the view taken there was that as mutual suspicion and distrust were gradually removed and trade, cultural and other kinds of cooperation developed a psychological transformation would eventually take place on both sides that would render even an intractable problem like Kashmir tractable. The experience of history has repeatedly shown that in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hostility even minor disputes become insoluble. On the other hand, it has been found that once mutual understanding has been brought about even the most complicated disputes become miraculously transformed and simple to settle. This is as true of disputes between brothers as between nations.

This interpretation does not imply that Pakistan agreed at Tashkent to put the Kashmir issue in cold storage. It was of course understood that the question would be raised—even as it was raised at Tashkent—but that Pakistan would not use it to block all efforts towards the agreed goal of Indo-Pak friendship.

I am persuaded that President Ayub Khan unreservedly accepted the new approach at Tashkent; otherwise there would have been no meaning in his signing the agreement. But he seems to have been pushed against his will by the implacable anti-India elements in his country who want neither a Kashmir settlement nor friendship with India. Perhaps they do not themselves know what they want except to see India go down.

In this situation a meeting between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Ayub Khan might prove a turning point particularly when Mrs Gandhi has had the benefit of a personal talk with Mr Kosygin. I am

sure the Pakistan President would not want to go back on his word. And an invitation to New Delhi and a frank talk with the Prime Minister might enable him to work in concert with Mrs Gandhi to save the Tashkent accord in the interests of the 600 million people of the subcontinent to which they are jointly committed. Without such a meeting I cannot imagine how the Government of India can intelligently determine its policy towards Pakistan in the coming crucial months. The result would be that we would be pushed against our wishes in directions in which our considered judgement we would never want to go.

Kashmir Question

The other initiative I have in mind is in regard to the internal affairs of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Here again we seem to be drifting. Unfortunately the general public in India has been kept utterly in the dark as to the true state of affairs in that hapless state. The world is however not in the dark. And as we have discovered to our sorrow the world counts a good deal in our internal affairs, whether it be our food or our armaments. Let us therefore face the fact that no matter what pose we strike in regard to Kashmir the world cannot be impressed so long as we continue to repress the people in the valley. Our case is that Kashmir is a part of India and the Kashmiris are Indian citizens. That precisely should be all the more reason why we should do justice to our countrymen of the valley and make them contented and happy. That however would be impossible so long as we keep in detention leaders as Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg and Maulana Masoodi and hundreds of other Kashmiris.

I believe the above would generally be conceded in private in New Delhi. But there is deep fear of Sheikh Abdullah's action after he is released. At the same time it has to be realised that no self-respecting political leader can be expected to indicate his future course of

action so long as he is in confinement, particularly when he knows that his release depends on a promise of good behaviour. Finding itself in this quandary, I fear, New Delhi considers it prudent to wait for a "favourable" opportunity. Unfortunately this way of thinking leaves the initiative to those in both countries who hate Tashkent from the bottom of their hearts.

Sheikh's Release

The quandary is however not as difficult as made out. It has been known these many years that Sheikh Saheb has been resolutely against Kashmir's merger with Pakistan. He did no doubt entertain ideas of some kind of an independent Kashmir, but I believe he is realist enough to realise that: (a) no solution of Kashmir question could ever be accepted by India after the the war with Pakistan which involved de-accession of the state or any part of it from the Union; and (b) an independent state in that part of the world could have little chance of survival in face of Pakistan's consuming hunger for the valley of Kashmir and the emergence of the Chinese power in the region, a power that cannot be expected to exercise self-denial in relation to its weak neighbours.

Finally it should be borne in mind that in every major step in war or peace, there is always an element of risk. Nobody who is not prepared to take risks can hope to be either a great soldier or a great statesman. It is therefore my humble advice to the Prime Minister and her colleagues to set at liberty Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues and the others imprisoned for political reasons in Jammu and Kashmir and invite the Sheikh and such others as she may want for talks in Delhi. The talks are bound to be prolonged, and patience and much ingenuity would be required for a compromise.

The consent and cooperation of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir would be necessary for the success of this initiative. I hope its cooperation will be forth-

coming, because I cannot imagine its wanting to rule indefinitely through repression.

Nature of Settlement

The question arises what kind of a settlement would Sheikh Saheb want. Clearly he cannot be expected to agree to the present status of the state, and he may want to go back to the original position of limited accession. In other words he may want full internal autonomy for the state, with the Centre exercising authority and control in defence, external relations and communications. This would need to be considered with an open mind on both sides, particularly in view of the developments since 1947. Dr Karan Singh's imaginative suggestion about reorganisation of the state might also be examined in this context. Finally there is the possibility of Sheikh Saheb's playing a constructive part in preserving and promoting the spirit and aims of the Tashkent declaration. Indo-Pak friendship has been his passion since his release in 1964. Now that both countries have accepted friendship as their common aim, Sheikh Saheb's services might prove invaluable.

These two initiatives might break the present deadlock and save the agreement made at Tashkent and help realise its aims. It is not unreasonable to expect that the good wishes of both USSR and USA would be readily available for both initiatives.

Release of Sheikh Abdullah*

The Kashmir question has plagued this country for 19 years. It has cost us a great deal materially and spiritually. We profess democracy, but rule by force in Kashmir—unless we have auto suggested ourselves into believing that the two general elections under Bakshi Saheb expressed the will of the people, or that the Sadiq government is based on popular support except for a small minority of pro-Pakistan traitors. We profess secularism but let Hindu nationalism stampede us into trying to establish it by repression.

Kashmir has distorted India's image for the world as nothing else has done. There is no nation in the world, not even Russia, which appreciates our Kashmir policy, though some of them might, for their own reasons, give us their support.

No matter how much and how loud and how long we shout that Kashmir is an inalienable part of India and that therefore there is no Kashmir problem the fact remains that a serious and urgent problem faces, and will continue to face us in that part of the country.

That problem exists not because Pakistan wants to grab Kashmir, but because there is deep and widespread political discontent among the people. The people of India might be kept in the dark about the true state of affairs in the Valley, but every chancellory in New Delhi knows the truth, and almost every foreign correspondent. It would appear that all but our intelligence know the facts; or perhaps, we too know the facts but do not wish to face them and hope that someone—may be Sadiq Saheb or Qasim Saheb—might one day perform some

*Extract from a letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on June 23, 1966

miracle that would bring about a psychological revolution in the valley.

De-Accession of Kashmir

Historical events, some beyond and some within our control, have narrowed down greatly the room for manoeuvrability of the Government of India. For instance any manner of de-accession of any part of the state is now impracticable, no matter how just or fair according to the principles of democracy and secularism. Whatever the solution it has to be found within the limitations of the accession.

It is here that Sheikh Saheb's role *may* become decisive. I have been pressing for his release not because he is a friend. Friendship no doubt counts in every human situation, but I hope I have enough moral discipline to allow without protest even my nearest and dearest one to be sent to the gallows if that were the demand of justice. I would have added "and of national interest" had it not been for the fact that it is often not possible to be sure what is in the national interest and different persons, all equally patriotic, may have different interpretations of it in a given situation.

On this count too let me say it was not justice to have arrested and detained Sheikh Abdullah without giving him a chance to clear himself of the charges so wildly made against him. On his part he had established his bonafides sufficiently by deciding to return to his country and answer his detractors.

Nor do I think him a traitor. Godse thought Gandhiji was a traitor. The RSS thinks Jayaprakash is a traitor. Godse was an individual, the RSS a private organisation. A democratic government represents the people and has principles and procedures according to which it functions. Nobody can be held a traitor by the Government of India unless it has been established in accordance with due process of law. If the government finds it difficult to do that, it is cowardly

to use the Defence of India Rules, and continue to use them indefinitely even when no palpable danger to the country's defence remains.

It was I think indiscreet of Sheikh Saheb to have met Chou En lai. But that is all that can be said about it. No fairminded person would consider that a treasonous act. When the Chinese attacked in 1962 did he not write to the Prime Minister "expressing our deep anguish"? Did he not on May 25, 1964, publicly rebuke Chaudhari Ghulam Abbas in Rawalpindi for having sought Chinese intervention? In London did he not say at a press conference (The Times, March 19, 1965) that China's claim to Ladakh was "inadmissible".

Much has been made of the Sheikh's statements abroad. I doubt whether on an objective examination those statements, as published in the foreign press and not their garbled versions published in India, would amount to anything more than what he had been saying in India. I agree that it would have been better if Sheikh Saheb had spoken less, and more guardedly. But Sheikh Saheb cannot be expected to be anything but himself. He just cannot keep quiet. This is a common failing of us Indians. Have not Union Cabinet members been speaking out of turn not only in India but even abroad, even in Jawaharlalji's lifetime?

I should like to close this chapter with one more quotation from the Sheikh. Before he left on his trip abroad this is what he said at a farewell function at the Constitution Club on February 10, 1965: "We might have differences among ourselves. But after all India is the homeland of us all. If God forbid, India ceases to be India and goes down how can others be saved? We have to look at problems from that angle."

But I have not been agitating for the Sheikh's release because he is a friend, or just because I am concerned about civil liberties. These considerations may be in the background. My primary concern in this matter has been to seek a solution for the Kashmir problem. As I see it, if there is any chance of this matter being settled

it is with the help of Sheikh Abdullah. I am not hundred percent sure of this; nobody can be. But the odds appear to me to be favourable enough to urge Sheikh Abdullah's unconditional release. An element of risk may be there, but there is risk in every big political or military decision, in fact in most human decisions, as even when two persons decide to wed.

False Propaganda

Some people (mostly crypto-communists and Hindu nationalists of all hues) have created a certain image of Jayaprakash Narayan—a silly idealist or a hidden traitor—and whatever that man says or does is twisted to fit that image. For instance I am supposed to have advocated giving away Nagaland to the Nagas and Kashmir to the Pakistanis. I have never even remotely made any such suggestion. Even in the case of Aksai Chin I had suggested a lease, an internationally recognised transaction and one agreed to by India in a recent Indo-Nepal deal. That lease too was suggested as a measure of give and take, that is if China agreed to India's counter-demand, may be in the Chumbi Valley or elsewhere along the 2500-mile border. But having created a false image it was easy for anybody to throw stones at it.

But that did not alienate Jayaprakash from public sentiment. Without appearing to be vain, I make bold to say that except for the Prime Minister there is nobody in the Congress government who is as constantly and widely in touch with the people as I am. Almost daily I address public meetings, and invariably my experience has been that I am heard in pindrop silence. Afterwards people come to assure me that they had been completely misled and if that was what I meant they were all for it. The only two meetings of mine that were disturbed were in Delhi at the time of my visit to West Pakistan, and the troublemakers were RSS boys whose minds were closed. I am not saying that everybody who listens is persuaded, but I *am* saying that the views I propound—with frank-

ness and sincerity—are far from being out of touch with public sentiment.

The leaders of this country are not doing justice to the people, it is the job of leaders to lead, but most of them are too timid and weak to speak out the truth, to advocate unpopular policies and, if need arose, to face the wrath of the people. For my part I have faith in our people; they are sound and intelligent. If they are given all the facts they can take the right decisions. May I say here, without appearing to flatter you, that by your recent bold decisions you have shown that you are attempting to give the people courageous leadership.

Plea for Abdullah's Release

Returning to the main theme, why do I plead for Sheikh Saheb's release? Because that may give us the only chance we have of solving the Kashmir problem. Why? Because in the event of the Government of India reaching an agreement with him about the future status of Kashmir—which will have to be within the limits of accession—the Sheikh is the *only* Kashmiri leader who could swing Muslim opinion in the valley towards his side. I believe it is obvious that the farthest that any status within the Indian Union can go is full internal autonomy, that is a return to the original terms of the accession.

Several questions arise at this point. Will Sheikh Saheb agree to any such status? If he does, would he succeed in persuading the Kashmiris to rally round him? Would not an autonomous Kashmir sooner or later attempt to secede from the Union?

Nandaji tries to cloud the whole issue by asking for proof that the Sheikh's thinking has changed. Earlier he seemed to think otherwise. Referring to the interview of Shri Radhakrishna and Shri Narayan Desai* with Sheikh Saheb, Nandaji stated in the Rajya Sabha on November 26, 1965, that the Sarvodaya leaders' meeting had produced a

*Both these leaders belong to the Sarvodaya movement and they went to meet the Sheikh in prison as emissaries of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan

"very positive reaction."

Be that as it may, all this talk of the Sheikh not having changed appears puerile to me. Keeping people in Jail is not the best way of inducing them to be more malleable. Nandaji should have learnt that much from his own experience in British Indian prisons.

Moreover, supposing the Sheikh were released with a fanfare of official propaganda about his having changed, would an iota be left of his political utility for India? After that if the Sheikh were to go back to Srinagar would the crowds chant "Sher-i-Kashmir zindabad" or "Bharat ka pithu murdabad"? What chance would he have of persuading the Kashmiris to become good Indian citizens? All this is so obvious that it is amazing that the Home Minister is unable to see it.

On the contrary I am sure that on his release Sheikh Saheb would again reiterate the right of the Kashmiris to decide their future. He would again declare that accession was not final and that the socalled general elections had not expressed the people's will. We should have maturity enough to understand that and not to denounce him as a Pakistani agent. He can never hope to persuade the Kashmiris to accept autonomy within India if he does not make it clear that it is they, and not anybody else, who is to take that decision. Instead of that if he came out and declared that the issue had been settled when he was in prison by the Kashmir Constituent Assembly and the two general elections that followed his voice would carry no more a weight than that of Bakshi Saheb did or of Sadiq Saheb does.

Autonomy for Kashmir

The more important question is how would Sheikh Abdullah want the Kashmiris to "decide their future?" I am sure *not* by a plebiscite. Then how? One way, and the best in the circumstances, would be to let the people decide in the general election in 1967. The Sheikh could do that by fighting the election on the basis of agreement

with the Government of India as envisaged above. Could the Kashmiri people be enthused over autonomy within the Union? I think they could by Sheikh Saheb's frankly telling them that that was the only way they could save themselves from self-destruction as a result of their territory becoming a battleground for India and Pakistan; that if it could be shown that they had taken that decision freely at an election run by their genuine leaders (like himself) Pakistan would have no ground left to interfere in their affairs; that that was the best way to bring about Indo-Pak amity; that they would be rid of the overbearing Indian policy and enjoy full freedom to order their lives as they liked. If all that were put across to the people by one in whom they had trust I have every hope that they would acquiesce willingly.

I may be asked what ground I have for believing that Sheikh Abdullah would accept autonomy within India? I have already made this clear in a press statement some time ago. I however reproduce it below:

> It has been known these many years that Sheikh Saheb has been resolutely against Kashmir being merged with Pakistan. He did no doubt entertain ideas of some kind of an independent Kashmir; but I believe he is realist enough to realise that (a) no solution of the Kashmir question could ever be accepted by India after the last war with Pakistan which involved de-accession of the state or any part of it, from the Union; and (b) an independent state in that part of the world could have little chance of survival in face of Pakistan's consuming hunger for the valley of Kashmir and the emergence of the Chinese power in the region, a power that cannot be expected to exercise self-denial in relation to its weak neighbours.

In addition to the above argument I have this to say. Sheikh Saheb told Narayan and Radhakrishna that he would be prepared even to accept the status of full internal autonomy for Kashmir *provided history were not allowed to repeat itself.* By that he meant provided autonomy was not gradually whittled down and the Centre did not

interfere in the state's internal affairs.

I grant that my case is not foolproof. But no case can be. Nandaji's own case is far from it. To hold a general election in Kashmir with Sheikh Abdullah in prison is like the British ordering an election in India while Jawaharlal Nehru was held in prison. No fairminded person would call it a fair election. Nor would that election settle any political issue more than the two earlier ones did. And if we miss the chance of using the next general election to win the consent of the people for their place in the Union I cannot see what other devise will be left to India to settle the problem. To think that we shall eventually wear down the people and force them to accept the Union at least passively is to delude ourselves. That might conceivably have happened had Kashmir not been geographically located where it is. In its present location, and with seething discontent among the people, it would never be left in peace by Pakistan. China is bound sooner or later to take a hand in the sport of fishing in troubled waters. With the issue settled to the satisfaction of the great majority of the people the external mischiefmakers would not find a favourable soil for sowing their mischief.

Internationally India's prestige would soar. No reasonable government would then be able to point an accusing finger at us.

Another question may be asked: Will Sheikh Abdullah negotiate with the Government of India to the exclusion of Pakistan? Well, he told the two Sarvodaya friends that in the light of the Indo-Pak war and its consequences he was quite prepared to have bilateral talks with India. He called that the "first stage," meaning thereby that later on Pakistan would have to be brought into the picture and persuaded to accept the compact made between him and the Government of India. I see nothing offensive in this approach. Sooner or later Pakistan's support for any real settlement in Kashmir will have to be obtained so that the ceasefire line might be normalised (rationalised?), disengagement of the armed forces of the two countries secured and the tension between the two countries, with

its terrible effect on Kashmir, eased. Instead of resenting Sheikh Saheb's anxiety to secure Pakistan's acceptance of his compact with India we should ourselves take the initiative and use his good offices in this behalf in the manner found feasible.

Kashmir and India*

This convention[1] of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State is of the most critical significance. It is I believe the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir that such a move has been made. Its success might well mean the dawn of a new and brighter day not only for the people of this state but also of the whole country. Its failure on the other hand might dash, if not for all time at least for the foreseeable future, all hopes of easing the political and psychological tensions, the uncertainties and fears that have plagued this state for the past many years, particularly since 1953. I therefore hope that the participants in this convention will be mindful of the very serious responsibility they have accepted. Their task calls for a constructive approach and a determination not to permit their deliberations to end in indecision or failure. I hope you will face this crucial task with humility of spirit, a preparedness to understand one another, and a realistic appreciation of the limitations the circumstances have imposed on all those seeking a satisfactory answer to this vexed question.

In view of the exceptional importance of this convention it is a matter of deep disappointment that the state Congress and the Jana Sangh have refused to take part in it. No doubt they have reasons for their refusal—and I do not wish to minimise them—but it is never constructive and certainly not in keeping with the spirit of democracy to refuse to talk to those with whom one is in disagreement, even complete disagreement. I have faith in human reason, and I believe that given the democratic spirit of

*The speech was delivered by JP at this conference

1. The convention of the representatives of the people of the state was convened by Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar on October 10, 1968

give and take there is no tangle that human reason cannot straighten out.

The problems of the state are in such a state of confusion and complexity, and most of the leaders in the rest of the country are so casual in dealing with them and so self-satisfied with mouthing shibboleths, that a convention of leaders representing different points of view in the state to hammer out a general consensus among themselves on the future of the state is manifestly a step in the right direction. The views that have been expressed in public statements by the state Congress and Jana Sangh leaders—and they are no doubt important views—could have been expressed at this convention to facilitate the emergence of such a consensus.

It seems to me therefore that a great opportunity for political understanding in the state has been thrown away. But as the London *Economist* said in a recent issue "what matters about congresses and conferences is not only who goes into them but what comes out of them." So let me hope that what will come out of this convention will really mark the beginning of a new development which brings peace and happiness where uncertainty and trouble have reigned for many years.

Need for Settlement

Before dealing with some of the vital issues before this convention I should like to speak briefly to those in this state and the rest of the country who claim that there is nothing left to settle in Kashmir, that the state is as irrevocably a part of India as, let us say, Uttar Pradesh. All those who give expression to this view are not really of one mind on the question. There are for instance the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and elements in the Congress and the Government of India who hold that Article 370 of the Constitution of India should be abrogated and the state fully "integrated" with the Union of India, and further that Indian citizens should be able freely to buy land and settle down in the state. There are others like Chief

Minister G.M. Sadiq, who asserts that the State is truly integral part of India though they concede that the quantum of autonomy the state should enjoy is a negotiable matter. There are also several variations on this general theme such as that Jammu should be separated from the state or that the area should be given a measure of regional autonomy within the state. There are also intermediate views between these proposals.

On the other hand Sheikh Abdullah and many people associated with him do not agree that the state's accession is final and irrevocable. Had Sheikh Saheb been just an individual of little consequence surrounded by a handful of other similar individuals his opinion could have been ignored. But if one does not want to indulge in wishful thinking it has to be recognised, however unpleasant and inconvenient this might be to some, that Sheikh Abdullah continues to be a key figure in the state because he still commands impressive mass support in the valley as well as in certain other parts of the state. That being so, for a large number of people the question of Kashmir cannot be deemed to have been settled unless the Sheikh is a party to the settlement.

Abdullah's Leadership

It is not necessary to remind you that if there was one man more responsible than anybody else for the accession of the state to the Indian Union in 1947 it was Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. Another historical event deserves mention in this context: at the time of independence, when overwhelming numbers of Muslims throughout undivided India had rallied to the banner of Mr Jinnah and subscribed to his two-nation theory, two shining exceptions stood out in bold dissent: the Northwest Frontier Province and the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Muslim masses in these two regions refused to be swept off their feet by the cry of a separate Muslim nation. That was due, let it be remembered, to the leadership of two deeply religious and towering, charismatic Muslims:

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Sheikh Abdullah.

After partition and the creation of Pakistan it was Sheikh Abdullah again who led, in the face of Pakistani aggression, the people of his state to throw in their lot with India. It was his consistently courageous, non-communal and enlightened leadership which gives the opportunity today to every Indian to hold up Kashmir as a noble example of Indian secularism. Even over the recent incidents at the Srinagar Engineering College, Sheikh Saheb demonstrated once again his uncompromising opposition to communalism.

These events, to mention only a few of many similar ones, place the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah and his views in true perspective.

Discontent in the Valley

There is another salient fact about this state to which I should like to draw the attention of those who assert that there is nothing left to settle in regard to Kashmir. That is the fact of widespread and persistent discontent in the valley. Part of the discontent is undoubtedly of the same nature that one finds, in some measure or other, all over the country that one finds, in some measure or other, all over the country. But there is also no doubt that the greater part of it is peculiar to the state and stems from the political situation: in particular, from the lack of agreement with Sheikh Abdullah and the absence of genuine democracy and good government in the state. Some of the recent judgements on the election petitions in the state provide a significant commentary on the working of democracy here.

It seems to me that all those who loudly proclaim that Kashmir is an inalienable part of India should feel deeply concerned over this persistent discontent. But regrettably one does not find such concern in these quarters. The majority of them believe in a policy of drift and pathetically trust to time to settle all problems. It does not occur to them that time has not settled this particular problem in

21 years. Another 21 years are hardly likely to settle it along the path of indecision and opportunism. Indeed, if the situation is allowed to drift further and Sheikh Abdullah continues to be ignored, extremism would keep on growing apace and the consequences might well be incalculable.

Use of Force

There are of course those for whom the solution of every problem lies in force. To them it is of little significance how popular Sheikh Abdullah is and how disaffected are his followers. Force in their reckoning will take care of all that. Such a naive and reactionary view appeals naturally to a certain type of mind. But the large-scale use of force, especially in such a sensitive spot of the world as Kashmir carries with it immense risks. There is also a real danger that the continued reliance on force in Kashmir may erode democracy in other parts of India, create and feed communal conflict, and become a running sore in the body politic and economy of the country.

Need for a Positive Decision

I have dealt at some length and with complete frankness with the basic principles which govern my views on the problem of Kashmir. With equal frankness let me turn now to those who are assembled here for this convention. Over the years a variety of solutions have been offered by different people with their own interpretations of the right of the people to self-determination. The point I should like to emphasise is that it is high time that a definite and realistic decision were taken now.

Time and circumstances move fast in a revolutionary age like the one in which we live. Statesmanship demands quick decisions in keeping with such changes. The question of Kashmir is not an academic one which can be debated indefinitely and in the abstract while

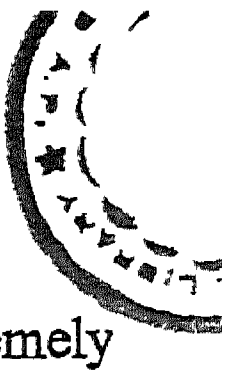
the economic and social needs of her people suffer sad neglect. It is very much a political question, but the choices in politics are always limited by a combination of circumstances which cannot be ignored.

There is frequent reference in a discussion of the Kashmir problem to the right of self-determination. That claim rests on an assurance first given on behalf of the Government of India by Lord Mountbatten in his letter to Maharaja Sir Hari Singh in these words: "As soon as law and order have been restored and the soil is cleared of the invader, the question of the state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people." It is but fair to point out that even now a large part of the state continues to be in alien hands As a further complication there was the tragic conflict of 1965, and a recurrence of such conflict cannot be ruled out so long as Pakistan declines to accept a no-war pact.

Right of Self-Determination

Let me also remind you that the world of 1968 is far removed in outlook and mood from the world of 1947. In these intervening years new factors have emerged which have radically altered the essential nature of the issues involved in a solution of the problem of Kashmir. The right to self-determination, viewed against such a changed background, needs to be interpreted afresh in keeping with today's needs of the people of Kashmir.

There is of course a broader implication in the right to self-determination, namely the inherent right of every people to determine their way of life and the form and character of their institutions. But this is an extremely complicated matter, and in the context of the modern nation-state the complications are further compounded. Now I am not an admirer of the nation-state and in fact regard it as an already outmoded and outdated concept. But it exists, and seems to arouse the strongest sentiment that moves and unites men today. It cuts across the boundaries of religion, race, language, culture and ideo-



logy, including the ideology of communism.

In the context of the nation-state it is extremely difficult to define and geographically demarcate "a people." Are the Kashmiris a people? Then what about the Dogras and the Ladakhis? Where will you draw the line? You can look around the world and see for yourselves how doggedly the existing nation-states, no matter how haphazardly created, fight against any of their "peoples" wanting to break away or to exercise their right to self-determination.

This is a hard fact of which due notice must be taken. Whether one likes it or not, the Indian nation-state, also a haphazard creation owing to the tragedy of partition, has its geographical boundaries demarcated. India is no more prepared than Pakistan, or for that matter any other nation-state, willingly and peacefully to let any part of the country break away on any plea whatever. Let this fact be duly appreciated. No doubt military means can be used to enforce the right to self-determination, but a breakaway part of a nation-state is never likely to achieve its end or maintain it for long by such means, unless it is helped by other powerful nation-states for their own selfish ends. Such a possibility is however entirely irrelevant to the discussion here, because I am not aware that there is anybody present who advocates a military or violent solution.

Power Politics

Other factors too, must be taken into account. The fate of the people of this region—Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh—was determined over a hundred years ago, not primarily in their own interests but by the consideration that the state lay wedged between three empires: Czarist Russia, China and Britain. The old rivals of the last century have no doubt disappeared, but the clash of interests continues in a different garb in today's world and in potentially more menacing terms. Small states, despite the noble aims and principles of the UN

Charter, continue to become helpless pawns in the game of power politics of big states.

These are unpleasant but inescapable realities, and as your friend and well-wisher I am bound to speak the truth as I see it. This convention must understand clearly that after the 1965 conflict no Government of India can accept a solution which places Kashmir outside the Union of India. Or to put it positively, a solution has to be found within the framework of the Union. This statement should not surprise any of you because this is not the first time that I am making it publicly. As some of you at least must know, this also happens to be the view of many others in the country who have been trying over the past several years to create public opinion in favour of an agreed settlement in Kashmir.

These then are the limitations imposed by circumstances to which I have referred in my opening remarks. Statesmanship on your side requires that you should adapt your policy and programme to suit the facts of the situation. To ignore them will only mean further tension, resulting so far as your people are concerned in frustration, uncertainty and misery.

These observations obviously raise a number of questions. Let me deal with some of them. I know that Sheikh Saheb and his colleagues have been emphasising the right of the people to decide their future. I have indicated the considerations which must qualify this right. It may, of course, be argued that the people have the right to decide whether they accept or not such qualifying considerations, and if they do, what kind of political settlement they would have *within* those limitations.

The main issue I would place before you today is how can the people decide these complicated and grave issues without clear and unambiguous advice from their leaders? I feel strongly, and wish to say to you with all the emphasis I can command, that *this is the occasion when you owe it to yourselves and to the people to make up your minds and advise them unambiguously on these vital*

issues. I do not think it will be difficult for the leaders gathered here to go to the people and convince them that the decisions reached here are the best possible solutions in the circumstances and would guarantee them peace, happiness and honour. If this convention is not to be a mere exercise in political debate but represents an earnest and constructive effort to find a practical way out of the present impasse I am convinced that this is the wisest course open to it.

Role of Pakistan

Another large question that my suggestion raises is how Pakistan will react to a settlement within the limits pointed out by me. It is often urged that unless Pakistan is at least tacitly reconciled to the situation here there can be no guarantee of peace and security in the state. This is true. So let us see what possible Pakistani reaction there could be. Pakistan's public stand has always been that the people of this state should themselves decide their fate. If you therefore take a decision here and persuade the people to endorse it, as I have no doubt you will be able to, Pakistan will have no valid grievance or cause for complaint. World opinion too would acclaim a settlement acceptable to the people of Kashmir and restrain Pakistan from the pursuit of any policy but that of acceptance or acquiescence. Should that happen it may prove the beginning of a new and happy chapter in the history of India-Pakistan relations.

Government of India

The last question, and the most important, is about the possible reaction of the Government of India. I have no doubt that your acceptance of this would clear the ground for a meaningful dialogue between your leaders and the Government of India. In that event even other leaders of the state who have stayed away from this convention may join forces with you. It seems to me that

a new day would have truly dawned then.

Such questions as the constitutional status of the state within the Indian Union, a guarantee that that status would not be unilaterally altered, etc, will remain to be discussed. But the proper place for such discussions is not here but at a later stage with the Government of India's representatives at the conference table. I am aware that in some quarters there is a view which is opposed to any state being given a special position. But I doubt whether such a view can be maintained in the changing circumstances of India. For historical reasons modifications will have to be made in the general pattern.

Such modifications in fact exist even today. There is also pressure from the states for a larger measure of autonomy. It would be wrong to consider such trends disruptive of national unity. On the other hand any attempt to impose rigid uniformity from above is bound to create tensions which may produce seeds of disruption. With the situation undergoing a great change as a result of the general elections of 1967 there is urgent need to review centre-state relations from an entirely new angle.

In a vast country like ours national unity can only be fostered in an atmosphere of wise understanding of regional sentiments and interests and a spirit of mutual tolerance. So long as political authority was the monopoly of a single party ruling at the centre and in virtually all the states the problem of centre-state relations did not appear of major significance. The general election in February 1967 has resulted in jockeying for power among political groups in a number of states. This is not the place nor the occasion for a detailed discussion of the theme. But it is relevant here to remark that Kashmir is not alone in its efforts to secure maximum autonomy.

Let me once again assure you that these words have been spoken from the heart and are intended to help you arrive at a wise and practical decision. All eyes in the country are turned towards you, and everybody expects your decisions will prove a turning-point towards a happier future.

Gandhi Centenary Year

Since this is the commencement of the Gandhi centenary year it is appropriate that we should turn our thoughts in homage to the man who led us in the freedom struggle. Partition caused him deep anguish; but when he found that it was inevitable because most of his lieutenants were willing to pay that price for freedom he continued to live in the hope that the separation would be as between friends and their relations could be defined in a treaty to ensure a smooth and harmonious transition. Tragically he did not live long enough after partition to see the fulfilment of such a hope.

It is my earnest prayer that this convention will so guide its proceedings as to make a renewal of that effort not only possible but also fruitful. There are all over the world today many spots of trouble and explosive danger. If through your decisions the prospects of peace and goodwill can be brightened in the entire region, described as the subcontinent south of the Himalayas, it will be a big step forward towards the world of Mahatma Gandhi's conception.

NAGALAND

Christ and Mahatma*

This day 95 years ago one of the greatest men of history, Mahatma Gandhi, was born. Throughout the world men will gather today to remember him and pay him homage.

Let us too honour and revere him and remember his great works and his noble teachings and draw inspiration and guidance from them.

We in India sorely need his guidance at this moment. Indeed it is not only we that need his guidance but the whole world. Modern science and technology have conspired with men's foolishness to pile up armaments, one more deadly than the other, until a situation has been created when even a mistake can plunge the human race into terrible destruction. Means of violence have acquired such unlimited power that violence no longer can be an instrument of policy.

India is not a nuclear power even though in atomic research and production of atomic energy it is one of the foremost nations in Afrasia. For that reason perhaps, in other words for the reason that the means of violence at our disposal are limited, reliance on violent means, military methods, seems to be growing in our country. Yet, the silent influence of Mahatma Gandhi is effective. One example of that influence is the decision of the Government of India to suspend armed operations in Nagaland to seek a peaceful settlement.

Negligence in Nagaland

It is a matter of deep regret that those of us who are

*Broadcast from AIR Kohima on October 2, 1964

trying to follow the path of Mahatma Gandhi have so far neglected to extend our activities to Nagaland. It would be fair to say however that the fault was not entirely on our side. Circumstances were such that it was feared that even Gandhian activities might have been suspect. But now that our association with the peace mission has created a certain measure of mutual confidence I hope we shall have opportunities to serve the people of Nagaland and bring to them Gandhiji's message of love.

For the people of Nagaland the message of love is not new, for that was the message preached 2000 years ago by Jesus Christ. That message is not easy to live by. And we see that neither does India follow Gandhiji nor do Christ's teachings rule the life of many Nagas. And there is hatred and bitterness and violence on both sides.

Message of Love

On this 95th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi let us therefore remember that ancient and holy message of love. Let that rememberance teach us today that in human affairs there is no greater force than the force of love. Gandhiji had taught that what was achieved by violence and hate was destroyed by violence and hate again. History bears testimony to that truth. We have the evidence of two world wars which did not solve the problems they set out to solve. The world today is still torn with strife and there is no peace in the hearts and minds of men. Force still remains the final arbiter in human affairs and armaments are piling up in every country.

Coming to Nagaland, here too as I have just said there is strife, hatred and violence, and an attempt to settle the issue in dispute by force. Yet I have found in the short period I have been here that every public function begins and often ends with a prayer, reading of scriptures and hymns. Christ commanded his followers to love even their enemies, to turn the other cheek when one is struck. His last words at the cross, "Father, forgive them

for they know not what they do," are the noblest words ever spoken, and yet the followers of Jesus and those who revere Gandhiji as the Father of the Nation are engaged in violent combat. Here is food for thought for all concerned.

The Real Test

I firmly believe, as I have said earlier, that no dispute either in Nagaland or anywhere else can be settled aright by violence. As a great Englishman has said: "Nothing is settled unless it is settled right." At the same time I firmly believe that there is no dispute that is beyond human reason and the power of love to settle. Happily armed operations have ceased in Nagaland since September 6, and after ten years the Naga people are again living their life in peace. Let us on this day of remembrance of a great leader and servant of humanity vow to make this temporary peace permanent and lasting. Let both sides to the dispute sheathe their swords and agree not to rest until a peaceful and honourable settlement is reached.

In modern history there had been no greater dispute than India's struggle for freedom against the mighty British Empire. And yet under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership it was solved peacefully, and neither party to the dispute felt that one had humbled the other. The Lord Buddha said that "that victory was true victory in which both sides felt that each had won and neither was defeated." Such a victory was Gandhi's. Let the lessons of that victory, let the teachings of Jesus Christ, be our guide. I have no doubt that then a similar victory will be achieved in Nagaland which will be honourable for all concerned and will establish lasting goodwill and friendship.

The Naga Problem

Having given careful and dispassionate thought to the Naga question, I am recording below some of my conclusions.

A Profound Misunderstanding

Though a section of the Naga leaders has accepted the present status of Nagaland in the Indian Union another section actively opposes this. Their opposition appears to be due to a misunderstanding and to mishandling on the part of the Assam and Union government.

The Nagas were conquered by Britain and lived for more than half a century under their rule, which was superimposed on the natural freedom of the tribes. When India won her independence the Nagas became a part of the free and democratic Indian community. But they failed to understand the significance of the change which had taken place and in their mind transferred *mutatis mutandis* their relations with the British to their new relations with India. This failure to understand their new status within India was due mainly to their not having shared in the struggle for India's freedom (though some of them had been associated briefly with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose), and to the unimaginative manner and lack of understanding of the Assam and Union governments in dealing with them and their aspirations. Even after the institution of the State of Nagaland the full meaning of their new status was largely lost upon the Nagas on account of the continued presence of the security forces, which appeared to some of them as an army of occupation. It is true that these forces were here only because of the violent activities of the Naga

underground; but whatever the justification the psychological effect of the rather large deployment of armed forces and of such things as curfews and other restrictions on the citizen's normal life has been one of wounded national pride and rebellious sentiment, particularly among the youth. This unfortunate effect has been heightened by lapses on the part of members of the security forces.

This regrettable psychological situation notwithstanding, there is no doubt that there is a profound difference between British-Naga and Indian-Naga relations. Under British rule the Nagas were a subject people; now they are a part, like the Assamese for instance, of the free and democratic people of India. Nagaland is not a colony or dependency of India, ruled and exploited by India, but just like any other Indian state, it is self-governing, with its proportionate (or even more than proportionate) share in the affairs of the Union Government. To be "*within* the Indian Union" is not to be within an empire or *under* the Union. It means exactly the same thing as being a member of the American Union, that is to say being California or New York, or Hawaii or Alaska.

It is a matter of sorrow that in spite of their political sophistication the underground Naga leaders have not been able to grasp the meaning of the term "within the Indian Union." Or perhaps they *have* grasped it, but fear bad faith on India's part, that is repudiation in deeds of what is professed in words.

Here is a deep psychological problem which can be solved only by continued "peace" in Nagaland and free intercourse at all levels.

An Illusion

No less profound than the above is the illusion that the underground leaders seem to labour under. They apparently believe, though they have never cared to discuss it frankly, that a separately, sovereign, independent State of Nagaland will be able to live its separate life,

preserve its independence, develop and grow, and function and discharge its obligations as a sovereign nation. I am afraid that in spite of all the goodwill I have for the Naga cause and the underground leaders I cannot but describe this belief as an illusion. In the modern world there is no nation, not even the greatest, that is truly independent. There is growing interdependence now rather than independence. All over the world nations are moving towards regional unions of one kind or another. The government towards a West European union is an example in point.

Moreover the population, resources and geographical position of Nagaland being what they are, independence in the sense of separation from India would not only immediately throw the Nagas of this state back into near primitive conditions and arrest and limit their future growth severely but also, in view of the presence of an expansionist regime in China and its manifest ambitions in the area, it would be impossible for this little, backward state to preserve its independence. The fond hope that the West would immediately rush to the help of the Nagas and save them both from falling into economic and cultural ruin and from being gobbled up by Communist China, or the hope that commonness of race would make China adopt a benevolent attitude to them, have no basis in reality and can only lead to disaster for the Naga people.

Therefore as a sincere friend of theirs I must warn the underground leaders that the separate independence they seem to be working for, is a dangerous chimera.

The Meaning of Union

Both sides assume that "within the Indian Union" has only one meaning, that in which the states of India are members of the Union. It is forgotten that even now the union of Nagaland with India has certain distinct characteristics which are absent in the case of other states. The original accession of the State of Jammu and

Kashmir was only in respect of three subjects and the President's special powers also had limitations not found elsewhere. The states of USA are also "within the Union," but the nature of their union for historical and other reasons is very different from that of the Indian Union. It should also be remembered that while at the beginning there was much emphasis on states' rights the federal government has now become far more powerful than was ever imagined at the time the original 13 colonies founded the Union.

Likewise, historical and other circumstances might dictate different terms for union of different areas in or around India. Rigidity in the form of the Union might make for more disunity than unity and loss rather than gain of territory. In the present case a more flexible interpretation of the term "within the Indian Union" might persuade the underground Naga leaders willingly to join the Union, thus making it stronger and more united. The alternative might well be scrapping the state and the military subjugation of those fighting for their concept of independence. That operation might indeed result in largescale extermination of the Naga people.

Here is my plea to both sides: I plead with the Indian Government for a liberal interpretation of the term "within the Indian Union," and with the federal government for a more realistic understanding of the term "sovereign independence." If both sides are able to do this a peaceful solution of the present deadlock, which both desire, might be secured.

Consequences of Failure of Talks

From every present indication it appears certain that should the peace talks fail the consequences will be frightful indeed. It is not the underground fighters however who will suffer so much as the Naga people. Undoubtedly India too will suffer, much more spiritually than physically. And the cause of peace and human

fellowship will receive may be an irretrievable setback in this part of the world. The leaders on both sides must never allow these talks to be wrecked and must discover a way to reconcile, without loss of honour or principle, their respective positions. The following plan indicates a possible way of reconciliation. The plan is based on the substance rather than the form of the two positions. Forms are often deceptive, but never the substance. I therefore earnestly hope that both sides will concentrate on the substance. In doing that they should remember that neither has vanquished the other so that there is no victor to dictate terms to the other. In the nature of things the settlement has to be a give and take.

There is another important aspect of the situation which cannot be ignored. The overground section of Naga leaders firmly believes that the constitutional link with India is imperative for the survival and growth of the Naga people. The settlement can no more ignore this genuinely patriotic opinion than the dangers pointed out above which a small, backward state is bound to face in the relevant historical and geographical situation.

Plan of Settlement

The position of the underground leaders is that there is already in existence their sovereign independent State of Nagaland which the Government of India should recognise. No one should delude himself that the Government of India would ever do that, involving as it does secession of Nagaland from the Union. The federal side on its part can never accept the position that Nagaland is already a part of India. It seems to me, if the will to find a peaceful settlement is strong enough, that an honourable way of reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable positions is for the federal side to decide through an act of their parliament to federate with the Indian Union on conditions and terms which the Government of India in its turn should accept. For the Government of India such a settlement would mean

amendment of the constitution so as to incorporate in it terms and conditions mutually agreed upon. Thus each side would give up something, and at the same time gain something. This would be statesmanlike for both sides and would usher in an unprecedented period of freedom, honour, happiness and prosperity for the Naga people, and at the same time strengthen the forces of peace not only in the region but in the whole of South-east Asia.

The mutually agreed terms and conditions may include:

1. Change of the name of the state, perhaps to the Federated State of Nagaland.
2. Territorial readjustment to bring within the federated state all contiguous, preponderantly Naga-inhabited areas of India.
3. The constitution of the federated state and its administrative pattern to be determined democratically by the Naga people and accepted by the Government of India if they do not offend against the basic principles of the Indian Constitution.
4. The constitutional arrangements agreed upon should allow for:
   a) consultation by the Union Government with the federated state on international matters affecting the Naga people;
   b) participation of the federated state, through its state militia, in the defence of the state territory, the militia being under the overall control of the Chief of Staff of the Indian Army:
   c) an annual financial subvention to the state from the Union.
5. A plan for the absorption of the present federal armed forces in a state militia and economic rehabilitation of those who might be found physically unfit.
6. Economic rehabilitation according to an agreed plan of those Naga families who might have suffered on account of the unfortunate conflict of the past years.
7. Setting up a joint commission consisting of represen-

tatives of the Government of India and of the overground and underground Naga leaders to work out a concrete plan to implement the above agreement.

Renunciation of Arms : A Prerequisite*

Contrary to the general impression created by some ill-informed press reports the peace talks in Nagaland have been progressing better than expected. At the last session of talks a development of profound significance took place which has unfortunately not received sufficient notice. In the course of the talks a stage was reached when it looked as if both sides were heading for a stalemate. The federal or underground leaders were demanding among other things that the security force be withdrawn from Nagaland as a first step towards establishing permanent peace, and the government side rightly insisted that this could be done only after a satisfactory settlement had been reached on the outstanding political questions. At that point the talks threatened to get bogged down. At that psychological moment the peace mission proposed that the issue could be resolved and the whole conflict transformed and lifted to a higher level if both sides agreed to renounce the use of armed force for securing any political objectives or settling any dispute now or in the future, and to pursue the means of reason and peaceful action.

To the complete surprise of everyone the federal delegates promptly accepted the proposal, and replying to questions asserted that they already had a mandate to that effect from their government. For the Government of India this was a sudden and unexpected but nonetheless welcome development because its position had always been clear from the beginning: it was extremely

During the peace talks at Chedema, Jayaprakash Narayan had suggested on behalf of the peace mission that both parties renounce arms for successful conclusion of the talks

distasteful to the government to be compelled to use armed force against any section of the Naga people. The Foreign Secretary, Mr Gundevia, on his part made it clear that if the underground was prepared to lay down arms the security forces would be withdrawn from all internal security duties, though the Government of India would continue to make suitable dispositions for defence against the threat of external aggression.

*Peace Mission Proposal**

Thus both sides have agreed in principle to the peace mission proposal. The significance of that agreement would be clear when the whole sad story of the past ten years in Nagaland is recalled to the mind. It has been a story of raids, ambushes, sniping, mutual killing, sabotage, burning of villages and innocent houses, re-grouping of villages, nameless atrocities, crores of rupees of the taxpayers' hardearned money eaten up every year by an endless campaign of pacification. It has been above all a story of deep physical and spiritual suffering for the brave Naga people. Last but not least, it has also been a story at which many international eyebrows have been raised and India's pacific professions called into question. When all this is remembered the full significance of what has happened cannot but be realised.

The acceptance of the principle did not mean that arms would be laid down immediately by the federal side and the Indian security forces withdrawn. The details of implementation of the agreement has to be worked out, and both sides have entrusted this job to the peace mission. It is hoped that in consultation with both sides this job will be completed by the time the talks resume in the first week of November.

Settling the details will not be easy and there will be many hurdles, but it is not difficult to achieve for both

*Jayaprakash Narayan submitted this note to the members of the peace mission, and a similar proposal was made on behalf of the mission during the peace talks at Chedema in October 1964

sides have been persuaded that the pursuit of violent means will never lead to a satisfactory conclusion of the dispute.

1. The delegations of the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland:
   a) being persuaded that the political conflict that exists between the two sides cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the use of violent means that have only brought untold suffering to the Naga people, and
   b) being further persuaded that persistence in the same course would cause further, and even greater, suffering to the people while leading to no satisfactory conclusion,
   c) hereby agree that the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland shall hereafter renounce the use of armed force for the resolution of the political conflict between them; and instead shall pursue the means of reason and peaceful political action.
2. In furtherance of this agreement
   a) The Government of India shall withdraw all her armed forces from internal security duties, law and order becoming the responsibility of the State Government of Nagaland;
   b) it being clearly understood that, the Government of India shall continue to discharge her responsibilities towards the defence of the country, and shall station such troops as may be necessary;
   c) the federal government shall lay down the arms in its possession and, by agreement, dispose off them in a manner so as to guarantee that they shall not again be used to enforce a political demand or to carry on a political struggle.

Note: As the Government of India does not recognise the federal government of Nagaland, the above agreement may be expressed by them in their own form of words without changing its substance in any manner

Need for Fresh Thinking*

I have great respect for our Parliament, but lately its tone and temper have been rather disturbing. For the last two or three days an intolerant spirit has been particularly manifest in regard to the Nagaland question. I am afraid it is being overlooked that the Naga question has been with us since the day of independence and has so far defied solution. It is therefore all the more regrettable that speeches made in Parliament should show that members have little idea of the size and nature of the problem in Nagaland.

It was some months ago that I had suggested that an all parties parliamentary delegation should visit Nagaland to study the situation. But so far neither has any delegation gone nor has any member on his own found it necessary to visit that troubled part of the country to see things for himself. And yet everyone seems to be ready with impassioned words and censuie for all and sundry. The excitement appears to be on three counts: (a) certain alleged remarks of the Rev Michael Scott; (b) the crossing over of Naga underground groups into Burma and their heading towards Pakistan; and (c) the underground Nagas demand for a sovereign independent Nagaland. It should have been possible and certainly more helpful, to deal with these matters with patience and understanding. Mr Scott has already disowned the remarks attributed to him. I should add that he is a friend of India and is as anxious as anyone else to find a satisfactory resolution of the Naga question. As for Naga groups going to Pakistan, this is indeed a serious matter and not only the Foreign Secretary, as leader of

*Press statement published on November 22, 1964

the Government of India's delegation, but also the peace mission has taken a serious view of the matter and will pursue it further. That Parliament should be concerned over it is natural.

The Naga Demand

So far as the Naga demand for a sovereign independent status is concerned it should have caused no surprise, much less excitement. That demand has been before the country all these past 17 years of independence. That the underground leaders should have opened the political negotiations by reiterating that demand should have caused no surprise in any well-informed quarter. The very purpose of instituting the ceasefire and peace talks and allowing the peace mission to function in Nagaland was to find out if there was a way to build a bridge between the position of the Naga underground and India's position, namely that Nagaland was a part of the Union. The peace mission has been working on the assumption that it was possible to find such a way.

Military Solution

It is easy to terminate the peace talks and renew the violent struggle, but before that is done it is necessary to take stock of the situation and weigh carefully the likely consequences and then only take the final decision. For myself I do not see how a military solution of the problem can be obtained without large-scale extermination of the Naga people, whom we consider Indian citizens. Also the fear that the fighting might open up an opportunity for interested foreign powers to fish in troubled waters cannot be brushed aside lightly. The same can be said about the fear of hostilities in Nagaland contaminating the minds of neighbouring tribes.

I therefore plead for cool and farsighted reasoning on this question. It is my view that there must be fresh and courageous thinking not only on the Naga question

but also on the question of our other border peoples as well as the border kingdoms. A good deal of imagination and political ingenuity would be required for this task. Our present constitution is too rigid to meet the needs of the situation, for which more flexible constitutional arrangements will have to be devised.

It is far more important to have friendly Nagas on our frontier closely associated with us in some new constitutional manner rather than unfriendly and discontented Nagas kept forcibly "within the Indian Union." The experience of the past ten years has proved that no one can defend the Naga Hills and the Nagaland borders better than the Nagas themselves. It is therefore essential in the interests of India, particularly in the interest of India's defence, to satisfy the Nagas so that they could be relied upon to be on our side.

I do not think it is beyond human ingenuity to find a constitutional formula which could satisfy at the same time the defence needs of India and the aspirations of the Naga people, or to be more precise, that section of the Naga people which seems to be considerable enough to have carried on a struggle with India all these years and is no doubt capable of carrying it on in the future. I hope therefore that there will be a more realistic appreciation of the problem and that Parliament would get down seriously to tackle it in the statesmanlike manner that befits it.

Peace Mission Proposa.*

I endorse the proposal of the peace mission.[1] This is the view of the mission as a whole, and our proposals are well described as a package plan. I should like to say something more on the varied interpretations given to our proposals. Our statement was deliberately couched in general terms. We tried to give the background of the conflict and to state both cases as impartially as we could; we also proposed what seemed to us to be "the fairest and most practical" solution. These are unashamedly *compromise* proposals. A compromise is possible because we think both sides have part of the truth. If one were 100 per cent right or 100 per cent wrong there could be no question of compromise. But the case put forward by the federal delegation is historically right; so too is India's case historically right. These are the two sides of the same coin. These two truths have to be brought together. I therefore strongly support the principle of the package proposal. The peace mission hopes to persuade all concerned to take a detached and nonpartisan view.

It would be very helpful if we have written statements from both parties accepting the mission's proposals as the basis of negotiation and settlement. We are *not* asking that the voluntary participation in the Indian Union should be unconditional. This voluntary participation would follow agreement on the pattern of the future relations between Nagaland and the Government of India.

* Jayaprakash's speech before the Tatar Hoho (Parliament of the Naga Federal Government) at Khensa on February 24, 1965

1. Towards the end of December 1964 the peace mission had submitted its proposals to the parties concerned

Great Urgency

I should like now to raise with both the sides a question of great urgency. We are all interested in seeing the present peace become permanent; this is the cry of every human heart. We desperately want to see that nothing happens to hinder the achievement of lasting peace.

The mission has however been receiving complaints from both sides about violation of the ceasefire agreement. The mission has no machinery to enable us to go into these complaints; we work merely as a post office. We have sufficient grounds to conclude that one of the terms of the agreement, namely that personnel of the Naga army will not move about in villages in uniform and/or with arms. This to a considerable extent is not being implemented.

The peace mission makes every possible allowance for the exigencies of circumstances; but since the agreement has been signed it is important that it be kept. It is alleged on behalf of the Indian side that with the help of arms, grain, money and taxes are being collected from the villagers and that they are also being influenced politically. This may weaken the case of the federal government, for if it commands the support of the people it need not resort to forcible collection. But apart from this what concerns us most is that the terms of the agreement should be scrupulously observed.

I therefore like to draw your attention to the question of violation of the ceasefire and request you to give some serious thought to the matter.

I do not think that a month's extension of the truce creates the necessary conditions for negotiations. Our request is merely that in order to preserve the ceasefire the federal government should agree to the proposal and should in some convenient way withdraw arms from its personnel. I do not think that it is not possible for the federal government to do so. We have at present before us the larger political issues and we should not mix them up with the smaller issues.

We are often bogged down in acrimonious discussion, accusing each other of violating the ceasefire. There have been complaints from both sides. The federal government holds that they relate to bad administration rather than to the ceasefire agreement. We need a neutral body, but this does not mean a foreign body. Indians and Nagas can be neutral. This body may be entrusted with inquiring into the allegations of the parties concerned. The above allegations have not been denied though explanations have been furnished by the parties.

For this reason we have suggested that just as the Indian security forces are confined within 1000 yards of their posts so the federal government might consider some way of withdrawing arms from its personnel and keeping them under its own custody. When movement has to take place between one camp and another the peace mission might be informed beforehand, just as it is now informed of the convoy movement of the security forces. We plead that a plan of this sort should be agreed on with regard to inhabited areas. But if this is not agreed, the whole cessation of hostilities may be endangered. This is a matter of the utmost urgency, because without it, it may become impossible for the peace talks to proceed.

Peace Mission Proposals

We have received no letter after our last meeting. We had previously received letters from both parties concerned. But neither reply however states clearly that the peace mission's proposals are acceptable as a basis—I repeat as a *basis*—of negotiation. This does not mean that you necessarily agree to every word. Nevertheless we are happy that not a single bullet has been fired. But we plead that this suggestion of calling in arms be considered. The Naga delegates agree to this suggestion provided a neutral body of observers is set up.

We have been discussing both the larger issues as well as a very important minor issue. A start can be made on the basis of the earlier discussion. The peace mission

would like to have a declaration from both sides that they accept our statement as the basis of negotiation in order to reach a final settlement. If this is once accepted, we can go forward. We should therefore take up the consideration of the package proposal in particular. The attitudes of the two sides do not seem to be very clear. But as soon as the parties accept our proposals this would clear the air and bring the discussion down to earth. We would be happy if both sides use the same form of words as this would obviate difficulties later on.

Pattern of Relations

Once the form of relations has been agreed upon by both sides, it may be placed before the people for their approval. It would be difficult to put the issue before them without a definite formula as this would be too vague to admit of intelligent voting. After working out a specific suggestion we may be in a position to place it before them.

As members of the peace mission we shall confine our discussions within the framework of our proposals. In its first letter of January 6 to the mission, the federal government states that paragraphs 10-14 of the proposals would be referred to the federal parliament. After the meeting of that parliament we received a second letter from the federal government saying that a fair plebiscite is to be called for. I shall only comment that this goes beyond the limits of the mission's proposals.

When the people do not know what "participation in the Union" actually implies what will they vote for? It *is* possible to participate in the Union on terms which are honourable. Participation is deliberately a vague word. You will participate only if the terms of participation are satisfactory. Mr Gundevia, leader of the Government of India's delegation has agreed to consider the terms only when the federal government also agrees to it. But that is *not* our proposal. What we say is "sit down and discuss what form of relationship you wish to have, and when

that is agreed you then decide to come in. What is the good of discussing if you will never come in on any terms? First you should decide the nature of relationship and then ask people to endorse it. To be within the Indian Union might mean various different things. We are not putting forward any rigid proposal at all. Discuss it, and then let people vote on your formula."

Assam has one kind of relationship, Kashmir another. Nagaland has a third. There is no unalterable picture. But the very phrase "within the Indian Union" is a red rag to a bull! We have sought the opinion of the Government of India on the question of its relations with Nagaland on the basis of *our* phrase. But such relations as those of two independent countries do not hold true in this context. But we refer again to the peace mission's proposals, especially paragraph 12. The form of participation is not laid down, and it may be discussed *de novo*.

There should be clear understanding of the paragraphs 12 and 13. I would be very happy if this whole matter were referred to the people. Let them decide whether or not they wish the peace mission's proposals to form the basis of a settlement.

It is for us to interpret the meaning of our proposals. We have made them to assist the two parties to come to an agreement, but it is not for us to settle the dispute. Both sides should first clearly understand the proposals, for this might help if they accept them as a basis.

It would satisfy me if the entire mission's proposals are submitted to the people. You may know the opinions expressed at their tribal meetings whether they are for or against the proposals as a basis of settlement. The members of the mission have not however discussed this together. But if you go to the people they should enjoy full freedom to express their opinion without pressure.

Principle of Plebiscite

On account of the phrases used by the peace mission —"upholding the right of self-determination" and—

"decide on their own volition"—you have spoken of a plebiscite. But if you take the paragraph as a whole we never meant such a kind of plebiscite. Our proposals are a meeting ground and must therefore be discussed as a whole. The phrase in paragraph 5 of your letter of February 3 about "good neighbours" may have various meanings. Assam and Bengal may be good neighbours; so may be two independent countries. You must therefore limit the choice to a possible form of cooperation. You must define what you mean by "within the Union" and words like "domination" and "brotherhood." How can the people decide when the meaning of the words is not clear? It is neither fair to them, nor to India.

I want to know if the federal government is ready to accept our proposals as a basis after this explanation. I may also point out that the Government of India's interpretation in this regard is also not correct.

We have said that the federal government should "decide on its own volition." That does not mean that the people should decide. If you accept the proposals and seek our interpretation we shall definitely give it. We may give our interpretation in writing if needed.

We envisage the fullest possible autonomy, yet we want you to spell them out. If the correct meaning of our proposals is placed before the Tatars do you think they will change their attitude? But it seems that our proposals *have not been correctly put to the Tatars*. I suggest that you invite the members of the peace mission to be present at the session of the Tatars so that they may be able to answer their questions and resolve their doubts. We shall all go.

Withdrawal of Arms

Now we may take up the other issue. We have a concrete proposal with regard to the withdrawal of arms by the federal government from its personnel and also suggest that it should give notice of its movement to the peace mission. We also agree that there should be a

neutral body of observers. The federal delegates want foreigners to be on the committee. But the Government of India has turned this down. Is it possible for both sides to set up a joint committee at the district level to investigate complaints concerning violation and to supervise the observance of the truce terms? Would you agree?

The peacemakers are engaged in a thankless task to try to bring the opposing parties together. In this case the parties concerned were engaged in a violent struggle, and this has inevitably affected the hearts and minds of the people and has brought bitterness, mutual suspicion and hatred in its trail. It is a great source of joy to us that both sides are prepared to forget and forgive the past and sit down and talk. It is on account of this spirit on both sides that a ceasefire was possible. Nevertheless there have been many tragic incidents in recent months which have very much distressed us. A recent incident near Mokokchung shocked us all. I feel happy to know that those who were responsible for this crime were sensible enough to confess their fault. There have been other incidents. But on the whole both sides deserve our commendation.

Mr Chaliha has already explained to you the genesis and objective of the peace mission. When the two sides fell apart we felt impelled, and were advised by our common friends, to intervene in the present crisis. We have not even now made any strictly political proposal on the question of independence or the participation which Nagaland should have. The mission has listened to the expositions of both parties of their stands. In paragraphs 5 and 6 of its document the mission has stated their cases as objectively as possible. We fully appreciate their points of view. But what we are concerned about is to find out a *peaceful* settlement, and this must be based on the spirit of give and take, which is the essence of compromise. This is necessary particularly when each side has part of the truth. When India took over power from the British it naturally claimed that it had inherited the present international frontier. Historically speaking, this is ture. But

equally true is the Naga view. When Britain withdrew the Naga people inherited the right to freedom and self-determination.

The peace mission was asked to find a way out of this situation. It was incumbent upon us to make some proposal which might be accepted by both parties, the Government of India as well as the Naga federal government. Acceptance of the proposals by both the parties is necessary for peace. The proposals which we commend to you are practicable and the fairest in the circumstances.

Isolated Nationality

It might appear to some that the peace mission has leaned too much towards India. But we feel that we have been impartial, or rather that we have been partial to both sides. We have been trying to ask what is the meaning of independence? Let us spell it out. We honestly and sincerely believe that the Naga people may enjoy the fullest possible freedom to preserve their identity, live as a nation, order their lives as they please and yet at the same time participate in a union with the other peoples in India. We live in a world which is moving very fast; it goes beyond isolated nationality. The nations of yesterday are coming closer and are linked in larger groups, not for all purposes but for certain common interests. We believe the formula we have proposed would be in harmony with the realities of the situation today.

The peace mission has no intention of imposing any solution or suggestion. It can argue and try to persuade the parties to the dispute. We have in fact been doing this and will continue to do so.

The proposals merely provide a basis; they provide a ground, a meeting-place, for talks. There is no commitment on either side. To accept the peace mission's proposals does *not* mean committing yourselves to be a part of the Indian Union. The Government of India claims that you are already in it, but the peace mission does not say so.

Let the Nagaland federal government negotiate with the Government of India, and if you decide after the negotiations that the terms of participation are satisfactory then decide to join.

If we in the peace mission think that our proposals are not in the best interest of the Naga people we shall not press them. No settlement is or can be permanent in the sense that it can never be changed. History moves on and times change. But we sincerely believe that our proposals are an approach, a road which may lead to an honourable and peaceful settlement. I ask in all humility that they may receive your earnest consideration.

We harbour no doubt that the struggle led by the Nagaland federal government cannot be regarded as a mere "problem of law and order." It is certainly a struggle for national freedom. It may not aim at overthrowing a government, but it certainly aims at throwing out a government—the Government of India which, according to them, is established in Nagaland by force. This is the meaning of your fight and movement.

Misunderstanding

But may I say that there is at bottom a profound misunderstanding about the relations between the Government of India, its component states and individual citizens. You were acquainted with one kind of relationship when Britain was the master of the whole subcontinent, including Nagaland. The government was run from Whitehall; it ruled not by consent but by force and was not susceptible to public opinion. Today there is an independent and democratic Indian Government taking the form of a union of states. I should like to explain this historic change and what it means. To equate the former relationship with the present one is wrong.

Before I deal with the difference between the two governments and their relation with the people I wish to speak about one question frequently raised by our Naga friends. "Before the British came," they say, "we

were free; after they have left we should also be free." I do not challenge the statement. I on the other hand agree with it. But one should also know *how* the British left the country. They did not conquer this country for altruistic motives, and they would not have left unless they had been forced to leave.

But no one takes this into account. I am one of those who fought against the British; I went to jail, my wife went to jail; I did not accept the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and I was involved in a violent and underground movement. It was due to Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom movement that the British were forced to quit this country. It is because of this movement that every inch of India, Pakistan and Nagaland is now free. My own inner feeling and conviction is this that when I and hundreds of thousands like me fought for the freedom of India we also fought for the freedom of Nagaland. One should not overlook this fact; it is an important fact of history and must be taken into consideration.

Now let me compare the British with the Indian Government. The British Government held India and Nagaland by force. There was no representation of India in the House of Commons though one or two Indians, long residents in Britain, might have been elected. Indians had no voice in their own affairs in proportion to their numbers, nor did the British Government make any attempt to give them such representation.

India is now ushered in democracy; it is now an independent country. Every citizen has equal rights no matter where he lives. Like USA it is a union of autonomous states. There are 16 states, and each is free to manage its own affairs through its elected representatives. There are certain subjects which are under the absolute control of the state and the state has the power to take decisions. Each state has its elected assembly, and its cabinet of ministers responsible to the assembly. The Government of India itself is made up of representatives from all the participating states; the lower house of Parliament is filled by direct representation, the upper house by a

system of representation for the states and special interests.

Multinational State

India is a family made up of equal nations, a multinational state. The Naga people are unquestionably a nation. All over the world there are states which are multinational. The United Kingdom itself is one, containing English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish nations. There are also multiracial and multireligious states. Different nations may, and do, share a common citizenship and membership of one state.

After the creation of the State of Nagaland it is possible for the Naga people to govern themselves. They are free within the present framework of the Union-state relation to govern their state. No one rules Assam but Assamese; no one rules Bengal but the Bengalis; no one rules Madras but the Madrasis. Each state in USA is an autonomous unit. The range of powers vested in the state may be great or small, but the nature of power and control is a matter of negotiation between the state and the Government of India. The situation is therefore entirely different from that which prevailed under the British rule.

There is no doubt that your struggle is *not* a mere law and order question. But I have tried to show that the Naga freedom movement may take on a different character if it is placed in the context of a union consisting of self-governing states represented in the Union Parliament. We have suggested these recommendations as we are aware of the nature of the Union of India. If it had been otherwise we would never have made such suggestions. What kind of relation we want may be negotiated; it is entirely open, and an agreement is also possible. Participation has many possible meanings. It is possible for Nagaland to participate in the Indian Union as an equal, free and self-governing partner. Even today as the constitutional position exists the laws of the Government of

India cannot be applied to Nagaland unless the assembly of Naga people first approve them.

If the Nagaland federal government feels it should have nothing to do with this constitution, it may by all means throw it away. But a new constitution has to be drawn up.

I must admit that I had little idea of the seriousness of the situation here before my association with this work. So little news appeared in the press. But in the last two months its seriousness has been brought home to me in all its depth, danger and frightfulness. By the grace of God wisdom has dawned on both parties. We have got now some kind of peace. The people of Nagaland now breathe more freely; people in India too feel relieved. The scanty news of firings, ambushes, sabotage had filled them with anxiety; but there is now relief and thankfulness.

Rise of Extremists

But we have not yet overcome the danger. This session of the Tatar Hoho has to consider how to meet the threat looming large on the horizon. This is not only a threat to Nagaland; it is also a threat to India. If the present negotiations break down its immediate result in India will be disastrous. In every country there are extremists as well as liberals, reasonable people as well as fanatics; there are those who appeal to humanity and those who appeal to violence. If the talk fails the hands of the extremists who have been demanding the deportation of Micheal Scott and the arrest of Jayaprakash Narayan will be strengthened. In such an event the real India—the voice of reason and humanity—will be the first casualty. There are some people who are engaged in sabre-rattling. If the peace mission fails this will provide an opportunity to those who wish to fish in troubled waters. This would be a disaster for our country, the land of Mahatma Gandhi. Failure of the peace talks would be our spiritual defeat. It involves the loss both of men and materials,

but this is insignificant in comparison to the spiritual loss. The peace mission is therefore determined not to give up hope but will continue its efforts to preserve peace and make it permanent. We have all staked our lives to achieve our purpose. For we realise that India's involvement in a violent struggle in Nagaland would not only harm people in India but would also besmear India's image internationally.

Failure of Peace Efforts

For the people of Nagaland failure of the peace efforts would mean terrible suffering. I need not elaborate. You know too well how the people in this unfortunate land have suffered in the past. I wish to say one thing more: We regard the Naga freedom fighters as Naga patriots, not as outlaws. They are not breaking laws; they are fighting for freedom. We have the greatest respect, affection and regard for them, and we are here as their friends.

I hesitate to speak behind the back of the Governor, but I should like to say unhesitatingly that to have looked upon the extension of the ceasefire until April 15 as a "last chance" was a grave injustice to the efforts of the peace mission. The mission has staked its life on this peace work. We shall not rest. We certainly do not regard it as a last chance. We had requested an extension of six months at the peace talks at Khensa. All we were able to get was one month and nine days. We shall plead again for a long extension. These matters cannot be settled with the threat of firing hanging over our heads; there must be peace in our hearts for this work. Those words have been deleted from the speech; that was a very unusual step, taken unanimously by the assembly, and I am very glad it was taken.

As for the question of the extension of the powers of the armed forces for another year, this was a routine matter. It is no new step. The security forces are here to aid the civil power; they have no power themselves. We in the peace mission would like to see the security

forces of India withdrawn tomorrow. We made an attempt earlier to get them withdrawn from all internal security duties, but we did not succeed. This single fact, of their presence here, makes the Naga people feel they are not free. They feel the security forces are a visible expression of their lack of freedom.

As soon as a positive decision is taken on our proposals your delegation might sit with the Government of India delegation and make arrangements to have the security forces withdrawn and arrange for your own armed forces.

The Nagaland federal government delegates to the peace talks did not feel any need to protest against the use of threats there. No threats were in fact made. A *statement* was made by Mr Gundevia about what might happen if breaches of the terms of the ceasefire relating to carrying arms in villages continue.

With regard to the firing incident at Longchang village the state government and the Chief Minister should be praised for the part they played in having this incident properly investigated. There have been other incidents also, and during the talks a request was made that the Nagaland federal government should give serious consideration to the matters referred to in paragraph 16 of the peace mission's statement. It was in relation to one such incident that Mr Gundevia made the statement in which he said that in certain circumstances the security forces might have to leave their posts to "defend the villagers" (his phrase). The peace mission said that if such action took place the ceasefire would almost certainly break down. But the Government of India does not want anything to happen to stop the peace talks. Mr Gundevia did not make a threat. He made a statement, and in doing so he may have spoken strongly and emphatically. If there had been a team of observers this thing might have been prevented.

Stalemate in Peace Talks*

There is a stalemate at present in the Nagaland peace talks. Unless this stalemate is broken soon the patience of each side is likely to be exhausted, and then even minor incidents might trigger off hostilities again. That would be an unmitigated tragedy for the Naga people, and I hope it will not be denied in any circle that this would be no less a tragedy for the rest of the Indian people. The spiritual harm that military action in Nagaland would cause India would be even greater than harm of other kinds. When the Prime Minister in his recent broadcast said he stood "unreservedly for peace" he was giving expression to the authentic mind of this country.

While the responsibility for breaking the stalemate lies on both sides it would not be wrong to suggest that as the maturer and stronger party the Government of India should take the initiative.

There is an additional reason why GOI should do so. It has itself contributed in no small measure to the creation of the present deadlock. This may cause surprise; so let me explain myself.

When the peace mission felt persuaded by circumstances to put forward its own proposals last December it did so in the not unreasonable hope that GOI would not only accept them as a basis for further negotiations with the Naga underground but also show deeper understanding of the delicate task of the mission in trying to reconcile two such contrasted positions: on the one hand that of GOI that Nagaland was already part of India, and on the other of the Nagaland Federal government that Nagaland was already sovereign and indepen-

*JP's second note on Nagaland, July 16, 1965

dent and the "aggressor" India should withdraw from it, to be followed by a treaty of friendship. The peace mission had hoped that when GOI stated that, unlike on previous occasions, it had come this time to negotiate without any prior conditions, GOI would display a more flexible attitude.

Inflexible Attitude

But these hopes were belied by the very first reply of GOI to the mission's proposals. Shri Gundevia's letter of January 21, 1965, to Shri B.P. Chaliha said *inter alia:*

> While my delegation and the Government of India do not accept the line of reasoning and a series of postulates on which the paper enclosed with your letter under reference appears to have been based, we welcome the conclusion which the peace mission has arrived at in paragraph 13 of the same, that a peaceful solution of the problem in Nagaland can only be found within the Indian Union, by Nagaland continuing. to remain within the Indian Union.

That letter—and it has not yet been withdrawn or amended—made it impossible for NFG to accept the proposals even as a basis for further talks, and for the following reasons. First, GOI rejected the underlying reasoning and postulates of the proposals, which were psychologically of the utmost importance. Second, GOI gave an utterly wrong meaning to the proposals in that while the mission, conceding the Naga right to self-determination, had invited them of *their own volition* to become participants in the Indian Union, the Indian chief delegate's letter said the mission had come to the conclusion that "the final solution of the problem in Nagaland can only be found within the Indian Union by *Nagaland continuing to remain within the Indian Union*" (my emphasis). The phrase "continuing to remain within the Indian Union" destroyed completely the principle of *voluntary participation* which was the heart of the proposals. It should be clear that as long as GOI interprets

the proposals in this manner NFG could never accept them even as a basis for negotiation.

Unfortunately, in spite of our repeated efforts, GOI did not think it necessary to change its stand. Finally, however, the situation was sought to be retrieved by Shri Gundevia at the Khensa peace talks of April 4 and 5 when he made a written statement in which he came very near to the mission's own meaning of its proposals. But at the end of it, when asked if the earlier letter of January 21 had been superseded, he emphatically replied in the negative. That destroyed the effect of his statement and deepened the suspicions of NFG about GOI's motives.

ATO-Kilonser's Letter

In this situation it should not be difficult to appreciate the reluctance of NFG to accept the proposals even as a basis for further negotiations. Shri Gundevia's letter of January 21 and statement of April 4-5 contradict each other. Anyone in the position of NFG would refuse to accept a self-contradictory position. It was therefore natural that the Ato-Kilonser of NFG, in his letter of June 15, 1965, to the mission should write thus:

> The self-interpretation of the peace mission's proposals by the Indian chief delegate (Mr Y.D. Gundevia) during the last peace talks at Khensa had made it impossible for the Federal Government of Nagaland delegation to accept the peace mission's proposals.

It is interesting to note that the logical implication of the Ato-Kilonser's letter is that if the contradiction in Shri Gundevia's interpretation of the proposals was to be removed, and the right construction (according to the mission itself) put on them, NFG would be prepared to accept the proposals. But even if my understanding of the words quoted above were to turn out wrong it is clear to me that it is for the Government of India at this stage to take the first step to break the deadlock by withdrawing or amending the letter of January 21 and stating afresh, notwithstanding what might have

been said before, its position on the proposals.

As I see it, this should not be as difficult as made out. For instance the Government of India might say that in view of the historical circumstances, as described by the mission in its proposals of December 20, GOI concedes the right of the Naga people to self-determination,* but owing again to historical reasons and the nature and character of the Indian Union GOI would be prepared for a peaceful settlement with the underground leaders only if, as the mission itself has laid down, that right was exercised by them to become participants, on mutually agreed conditions, in the Indian Union.

I do not think such a concession by GOI would start a process of balkanisation of India as sometimes argued. If the Nagas decide to participate in the Union the effect would be not the beginning of balkanisation but further consolidation and strengthening of the Union. If on the other hand they refuse to be participants there would be no commitment on India's part to accept the separation of Nagaland, which GOI would be free to resist in any manner it chose. That would spell the failure of the mission, but the effort at peacemaking would have been worthwhile and should strengthen the position of India in all the bordertribal areas.

Some sections of Indian public opinion and of GOI show annoyance at times that NFG has not shown due regard for the mission and hastened to accept its proposals. It should be appreciated that when GOI itself is yet to accept the proposals, it is not reasonable to be annoyed with others.

Composition of Delegation

There is another point I should like to make in this note, a point which threatens to create a fresh deadlock. That point relates to the demand of NFG that the level

*A different form of words can be used to convey the meaning of self-determination, but this has become such a hallowed term that refusal to use it might cause unnecessary misunderstanding

of the GOI delegation be raised higher. By that they mean, as they have been explaining to the mission for sometime past, that the leader of the Indian team should be a person of political standing. They somehow feel that it is not possible to talk business with officers, no matter how eminent their position. I need not say that I have the highest regard for our top civil servants; they are highly competent, trained, clever and conscientous in their work. But I think NFG has a point here. Whereas the civil servant is trained for administration and execution the job in Nagaland is not administrative but political in character, requiring political skill, imagination, sympathy and flexibility.

It is said that NFG wants a politician such as the Foreign Minister to lead the GOI delegation because it is anxious to internationalise the problem and the negotiations. This argument does not appeal to me. After all Nagaland has been and still is under the External Affairs Ministry, and Prime Minister Nehru himself has had talks with the Naga leaders. I am not suggesting that the Foreign Minister must lead the delegation. I am only pointing out that if he did so he would only be carrying out his duties because he and not the Cabinet Secretary is responsible to Parliament and the country for Naga affairs.

Accordingly I would suggest one of two alternatives to the government: (a) either a Congress leader (or any other party or nonparty leader) of high standing, commanding the confidence of the Prime Minister, should lead the Indian delegation; or Sardar Swaran Singh should attend the peace talks (naturally leading the Indian team) once, *after* the appropriate ground had been prepared by the peace mission, and thereafter leave it to the Cabinet Secretary to work out details. Needless to say the Foreign Minister should meet NFG only after GOI has made its position clear about the mission proposals as suggested in the first part of this note, and as I have just said after the mission on the basis of GOI's new statement prepared the ground for the meeting. Until

then the delegations need not meet.

I earnestly hope that both points made in this note will receive the due consideration of the government, and personally of the Prime Minister if necessary.

Nagas in Manipur*

In my brief stay in Manipur I had interviews with the concerned persons at Imphal, Ukhrul and Liva Changing in Tengnopal. But because of the short notice given of the visit I could not see any underground Naga leaders. Details of these interviews are given later.

This was the first time any member of the Nagaland peace mission had been to the state, though all three members of the team of observers (Marjorie Sykes, Nabakrushna Choudhuri and Dr M. Aram) had been there to investigate complaints of ceasefire violation. I too had earlier passed through Imphal several times, but only in transit to or from Calcutta.

The peace mission has not wilfully neglected its responsibilities in Manipur. The fact is that the state government did not seek the good offices of the mission in dealing with the situation in the three subdivisions (Mao, Ukhrul, Tamanglong) covered by the ceasefire.

It would be unfair to the state government if I do not add that there were valid though unexpressed reasons why that government had cold-shouldered the mission. That reason to my mind was that whereas the mission was appointed with the full approval of the Nagaland Government and the unanimous support of the state assembly the Manipur government was neither consulted nor its position taken into account; and when the ceasefire, or suspension of operations according to official idom, was being negotiated and the demand of the Naga underground (the "Federal Government of Nagaland" as they call themselves) that the Naga majority areas of Manipur—Mao, Ukhrul and Tamenglong—be

*Extracts from JP's letter to Chief Commissioner, Manipur

included in the ceasefire area was being conceded, the state Government was again neither consulted nor were its known views in the matter given weight. Of these two omissions the second naturally gave greater offence to Manipur. Its subsequent attitude to the mission is therefore understandable, though the mission was not responsible for the neglect shown to the state government.

Two Issues

Before going to Manipur I glanced through Marjorieben's reports to the mission on her investigations there. (Marjorieben always had with her some other members of the observers' team as well as a church leader from Kohima, usually Rev Kenneth Kerho). These reports left two strong impressions on my mind: one, that the Manipur Naga underground leaders had completely misunderstood the meaning and scope of the ceasefire; two, the behaviour of the Manipur Rifles was making more enemies than friends.

Regarding the first, the Manipur Naga underground leaders (who have come overground as a result of the ceasefire) are labouring under one basic illusion, namely that when the Government of India agreed to the ceasefire it also implicitly agreed that its authority had ceased to operate in the areas concerned and that FGN had taken its place there.

It is a moot point whether this fantastic illusion is genuine—there is of course no warrant for it in the terms of the ceasefire—or whether the Naga underground is only exploiting the suspension of operations to build up its organisation and authority. Whatever the truth of the matter there is no doubt that if the present studied and deliberate obstruction of normal administrative work continues there will soon be nothing left of the ceasefire but the name. This is a matter that must be urgently taken up by the mission. I am writing personally to the chief delegate about this matter, as well as his letter to the mission protesting against collection of taxes by NFG

in the Chakesang area.

As regards the Manipur Rifles, the question is bound up with the larger question of the role of repression in a political conflict. My talks with the Manipur authorities gave me the impression that they still subscribe to the old fashioned theory of "teaching a lesson." For instance the imposition of collective fine on the Ukhrul village of Kalhang, where Mr Yarnao, a prominent Naga Congressman, was recently shot dead, was justified on the ground that it would be a lesson to other villages. To my mind what is more likely to happen is that even the nonhostile elements in that village would turn hostile. Marjorieben has given in her report some details of the drastic methods she was told the Manipur Rifles often employed.

Mixed Population

Though it is wellknown, it needs to be stated here that the total situation in Manipur is far more complicated and confused than that of Nagaland. In Nagaland all the people are Nagas divided into a number of tribes. In Manipur the majority of the population are Meiteis who inhabit the fertile and beautiful valley of Imphal; and while the majority of hill tribes are Nagas there are many non-Naga tribes, some of whom such as the Kukis have traditional hostility for the Nagas. Religion is another complicating factor. While in Nagaland the majority are still non-Christian the leaders on both sides (the Nagaland State Government and the FGN) is overwhelmingly Baptist Christian, in Manipur the Meiteis or Manipuris are Hindus, and the politically conscious elements among the tribesmen are Christian.

On the other hand, despite the religious and tribal divisions, there is no doubt that all the indigenous peoples of Manipur, including the Meiteis, and of Nagaland are racially Indo-Mongoloid. It is a pity that this racial oneness has not yet been invoked to unite these peoples, because the future of these peoples lies not in fragmenta-

tion but in unity and consolidation. It is my personal view that a subunion of the states of Manipur and Nagaland within the larger Union of India makes far more sense than the petty regional ambitions of the different areas.

Plan for Peaceful Settlement*

A. There are two broad possibilities of settlement:
   a) Interim
   b) Final
B. Interim Settlement (IS):
   1. The IS will naturally be of less far-reaching nature than the final one.
   2. It may be on the lines of the Kadaghe's "peace period" proposal.
   3. A factor *against* an IS is that it will keep the uncertainties and conflict of aims alive.
   4. Factors in favour of an IS are:
      a) it might be easier to get;
      b) during the interim period mutual suspicions might be dispelled and the interim relationship so strengthened that it might come to be permanently accepted.
   5. The IS may include the following:
      a) interim acceptance of the present constitutional relationship, with such amendments as:
         i) acceptance of the geopolitical units of the Naga federal government (NFG) such as the three states and the administrative divisions;
         ii) introduction of a new pattern of administration (including judicial) that may be cheaper, more "home-made" and suited to Naga traditions; this may also mean adoption of the present NFG administrative nomenclature and distribution of powers and duties;

*JP's third note on Nagaland

iii) amendment of the present financial relationship with the Union to make Nagaland more autonomous in fiscal administration, without any central budgetary control, audit, etc. Possible ways of doing this may be (a) a fixed annual subvention from the centre to be spent as desired by the Nagaland Government without being accountable to the centre—the only accountability being to the Nagaland Assembly or Tatar Hoho as the case may be; and (b) the state to have its own system of taxation, including income-tax, etc;

b) release of all political prisoners;

c) economic rehabilitation of all those families that may have suffered during the prolonged political conflict in Nagaland;

d) withdrawal of all internal security forces as distinct from defence forces, and mutual agreement to be reached as to the strength and disposition of the defence forces in the State;

e) absorption of the present NFG army in (a) the Indian defence forces; (b) the Nagaland Armed Police (the name may be changed); and economic rehabilitation of those members of the NFG army found physically unfit for (a) and (b);

f) General election to be held at an agreed time on the basis of the present constitution as amended by mutual consent;

g) the relationship to be reviewed after expiry of the agreed interim period.

D. Final Settlement (FS) :

1. So far as one can see no *final* settlement with India can be *peacefully* (or otherwise) reached unless NFG accept some form of constitutional *link* with the Indian Union, so that Nagaland is a part of the Union.
2. The form of the link can be negotiated.

3. The link may be of the following nature:
   i) Nagaland may be renamed the Naga Autonomous Region of the Indian Union.
   ii) The Naga Autonomous Region to be completely autonomous in *all internal* matters.
   iii) Defence and foreign relations of the region to be in the hands of the Union, with the proviso that the autonomous government would as a rule be consulted in these matters.
   iv) Communications to be a joint charge.
   v) Currency to be common.
   vi) Indian laws not to apply automatically to the region.
   vii) The land with all its resources (in the region) to belong forever to the Naga people.
   viii) Release of all political prisoners.*
   ix) Economic rehabilitation of all those families that may have suffered during the prolonged political conflict in Nagaland.*
   x) Withdrawal of all internal "security" forces as distinct from defence forces, and mutual agreement to be reached as to the strength and disposition of the defence forces in the State.*
   xi) Absorption of the present NFG army in (a) the Indian defence forces; (b) the Nagaland Armed Police (the name may be changed); and economic rehabilitation of those members of the NFG army found physically unfit for (a) and (b).*
   xii) The Naga people to hold their own constituent assembly to draft a constitution for the region.
   xiii) The FS as described above to be (a) approved at a referendum of the Naga people and (b) adopted by the Indian Union Parliament as an amendment of the present constitution.

*These are common to both IS and FS

Nation State and Self-Determination*

This is indeed a very great and pleasant surprise for me and my wife. I have been to Nagaland many times and travelled around in this beautiful country, and I must say that wherever I went I was welcomed as a friend and brother. Everywhere I and my wife received the affection and warmth of the Naga people. The Baptist Church Council and the Peace Centre, with the help of the state government and the district administration, have been very kind indeed to arrange such a wonderful reception, for which I am deeply grateful. I am also most grateful for the kind words spoken by the chairman and the speakers of this evening. I shall dearly cherish the memory of your kindness and regard.

I do not know if this is a proper occasion to say much. As you know, delicate negotiations are going on between the leaders of the federal government and the Government of India. And I am sure that everyone of you would agree that no one should say anything which would in any way affect these talks. Still, as you have come to hear me, I must say something. I shall confine myself to a few words of advice to the Naga people in general and to the "overground" and "underground" Naga leaders in particular.

Before I do so, let me say that even though everyone of you has expressed your gratitude for the work of the peace mission. I am conscious of the fact that whatever little the peace mission was able to achieve was entirely due to the cooperation and labour of the church leaders, as also the cooperation of the federal Naga leaders and the state government of Nagaland and the Government

*JP's speech at a reception on August 12, 1966, by the Baptist Church Council and Peace Centre at Kohima

of India. It was the Baptist Church Convention that appointed the peace mission; it was with the help of the church leaders that contact was established with the federal leaders; it was with their help and indefatigable labour that the ceasefire agreement was signed; and since then until the end it was through the liaison committee of the Church Council that the peace mission remained in contact with the federal leaders.

I cannot forget that soon after the peace mission released its peace proposals, which I think still hold good and point to the only possible approach to a peaceful settlement, it was the liaison committee of the Baptist Council which declared its wholehearted support. For the peace that reigns over Nagaland more than the peace mission it is the Baptist Church Council to which the people should be beholden.

I should now like to say a few words of advice to the Naga leaders of all sides. As I have always tried to emphasise, both in private and public talks, a peaceful settlement is never possible unless both sides to the dispute are prepared for a give-and-take. This is particularly so when both sides possess a part of the truth. When the federal leaders say that they have never surrendered their sovereignty to anyone they are right. The peace mission accepted their claim. At the same time the peace mission also said that when the Government of India claims that Nagaland is a part of India it too has historical justification. It is undeniable that when the British Government handed over power to India Nagaland was a part of Indian territory. The case of Burma is not relevant, because the government of independent India did not inherit that territory from the British Government. The Government of India starts from there, and nobody can say that history is not on its side.

Naga Sovereignty vis-a-vis India's Integrity

Such being the situation, a middle way, or a meeting point between the claims of both sides, has to be found.

This is a task that calls for statesmanship and vision. On one side the sovereignty of the Nagas has to be preserved and on the other the integrity of India. This may not be so difficult to achieve if the nature of the Indian Union is properly appreciated. India is a voluntary and indissoluble union of states, and the sovereignty that resides in the Indian people is divided between the Union and the states by mutual agreement and for mutual benefit. All parts are equal and the states are certainly not colonies or slaves of the Union.

In a similar manner the Naga people may on their own volition share a part of their sovereignty with the Indian Union for mutual benefit, retaining the rest of their sovereignty themselves. By doing so they would not in any way lose their sovereignty or become a colony or slave of anyone. They would continue to be, along with their Indian brethren, a sovereign people. What part of their sovereignty they should share with the Indian Union and in what manner should be settled across the table at the negotiations going on between the federal Naga leaders and the Government of India.

Modern Nation-States

The Government of India, on its part, should be prepared to agree to the Nagas adopting this procedure to settle their future. Some Naga leaders argue that as they are a separate nation there could be no question of their becoming a part of another nation. This is due to a misunderstanding of the historical process through which the modern nation-states have come into being. The nation-state is a comparatively new phenomenon. It is not older than 200 years. Earlier there were no nations in the modern sense of the term. There were kingdoms, empires, tribes, unions of tribes, city states, but no nations. There are many nations today. But there is no nation in the world that is not a mixture of subnations. Every nation today is a multination, a multinational state. Look at Soviet Russia, look at China. In Soviet

Russia there are about 76 nations, national minorities. The British nation has at least three subnations: English, Scottish, Welsh. And the British Constitution gives to the Scottish and Welsh national minorities certain rights and guarantees. Most modern nations are the result of violence, some are voluntary unions.

The question of the right of national self-determination has been raised. That no doubt is an internationally recognised right. But it is not an unlimited right. Because if it were to be enforced indiscriminately very few modern nations would remain whole; it would end in general dismemberment and world disorder. International law itself recognised these limitations.

The other advice I wish humbly to offer to Naga leaders as well as to the Government of India is that each side must take into sympathetic consideration the *difficulties* of the other. Unless they are both prepared to do so I am afraid there will be no peaceful settlement. The federal leaders must understand that India *cannot* agree to anything that might start the process of disintegration of its territory. That this is not an idle excuse should be clear from what is currently happening in the Mizo Hills. A sovereign State of Nagaland *outside* the Indian Union is unthinkable for India. But a sovereign State of Nagaland becoming a *member* of the Union is eminently practicable and negotiable. On the other hand the Government of India cannot hope to persuade the federal Naga leaders that the Naga people are *already* Indian citizens, and the only question to settle is what more powers have to be given to them.

I did not come to Kohima to offer this gratuitous advice. But as you gave me this opportunity to speak to you I thought I might put it to this constructive use. The advice has been given in all humility.

Resignation From Peace Mission

I have come to Nagaland after an interval of ten months. In this period much has happened. I tendered

my resignation from the peace mission to the Baptist Church Council last April. That was not due to my sudden lack of interest in the work of the cause of peace in Nagaland but entirely due to the fact that I felt I had forfeited the confidence of the top leaders of the federal government. But that is an old story, and there is no point talking. Shortly afterwards the peace mission came to an end.

But whether there is a peace mission or not, or whether I am a member or not, as a Gandhian peace worker I am deeply interested in the cause of peace in Nagaland. So I came to renew friendships here and to place my services, for what they may be worth, at the disposal of the people, the Baptist Council and the leaders of Nagaland. In India I have been trying, as you know, to educate public opinion on the question of Nagaland, and that I shall continue to do. Here in Kohima, as you know again, the All India Shanti Sena Mandal (Peace Corps Association) has set up a peace centre. This centre will continue to work for peace in Nagaland. We are also considering taking up certain social service and constructive programmes which we hope will receive your blessings and cooperation.

Peacemaking in Nagaland

I

The Nagas of India—there are also Nagas in the adjoining areas of Burma—have always excited interest in Britain. Earlier, during the days of the British Empire, the interest was chiefly ethnological, and outstanding work was done by Hutton and others in that field. Since the independence of India the interest has been mostly political. When the Rev Michael Scott, a close friend of the Naga leader Mr A.Z. Phizo, was appointed a member of the Nagaland peace mission, the question became of intimate concern to related circles in Britain.

Now that the peace mission is no more, a host of questions are perhaps being asked in Britain—as they are in India—as to the future of Nagaland. I shall endeavour to tackle some of these here.

Did the disintegration of the Nagaland peace mission imply the end of the peace talks between the Government of India and the leaders of the underground Nagas? No. The Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi, has emphatically stated that she means to continue the talks until a peaceful settlement is reached. The Nagas have equally strongly affirmed their desire to presevere in their search for a peaceful solution. Certain routine tasks such as arranging for extension of the ceasefire can be, and are being, performed by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council.

A more important function of the peace mission was investigation of complaints from both sides about violation of ceasefire terms. This helped to keep down the temperature all around and prevented incidents from

*Extracts of this article were published in the *Sunday Observer* London

wrecking the peace effort. That work was not handled directly by the peace mission but through observers working under its authority. The observer's work has been found to be so useful that both sides have agreed to continue to use their services. They function now directly under the joint authority of the two parties to the dispute. It may be of interest to know that one of the observers is Miss Marjorie Sykes, an English-born Quaker who has made India her home for the last 36 years and who was closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi in his work for basic education. The other observer is Dr M. Aram from South India, an educationist and secretary of the World Peace Brigade (Asia region).

It will be seen thus that the disappearance of the peace mission is not hampering in any serious way the continuation of the peace talks. This was not unexpected once a direct contact at the highest level between the Government of India and the rebel Nagas had been arranged by the peace mission: two meetings between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the top leaders of the Naga underground have already been held, one of them after the end of the peace mission.

Prospects of Peace Talks

What chances are there for the peace talks to succeed? If either side rises above its hallowed slogans and is prepared to appreciate the difficulties of the other my studied answer is : good.

There are some who love to rake up the past and who believe that by apportioning blame a solution can be arrived at. Admittedly, in the ten years of police operations, roughly from 1953 to 1963 (the peace mission started its work in April 1964 and brought about a cease-fire in September the same year), many atrocities were perpetrated by the Indian security forces, of which every decent Indian I am sure is ashamed. Admittedly also, the Naga rebels committed atrocities, not only against the security forces but also against their own people who

refused to support them.

I am not saying that one wrong avenges the other. But will a post-mortem help at this stage? Will a settlement be nearer? The atmosphere will be sure to become thick with charges and counter-charges, and anger and hate would be whipped up, just the kind of climate in which no amicable settlement could ever be reached. This in fact was present in the minds of both parties at the outset of their talks. Foreign Secretary Gundevia, leader of the Indian Government delegation in his opening address had called for a spirit of forget and forgive. On his part the Kadaghe (president) of the underground government (they call themselves the Nagaland federal government) in his message to the conference expressed similar sentiments. The church leaders invoked God's forgiveness and prayed for sufficient wisdom to be granted to the delegation.

II

Two Essential Preconditions

As I see it there are two essential preconditions for a peaceful settlement in Nagaland. Both were fully understood by the peace mission, and the only proposals it made in the two years of its life were based on them.

One precondition is that both sides should renounce the use of armed force to achieve their political objectives. Indeed this is implicit in the very concept of a peaceful settlement. At the very second conference of the peace delegation on October 12, 1964, the peace mission put forth a proposal to that effect. In the words of the official record: "Not only was the principle of the renunciation of armed force affirmed (by the delegates) but the peace mission was asked to draw up in consultation with both sides a detailed practical plan whereby disarmament on the part of the federal army and withdrawal of the Indian security forces from the functions of peace preservation in Nagaland can be effected." That was a red-

letter day for the peace mission, but, alas, disappointment was not slow in coming.

The practical plan went as follows:

The peace mission respectfully begs to propose the following steps for the consideration and acceptance of both sides:

1. The Government of India would by 15th November, 1964, intimate the number of posts and strength of the forces stationed in Nagaland for the purpose of internal security and submit a plan for the withdrawal of such forces.
2. The federal government of Nagaland would give to the peace mission by 15th November, 1964, a full list of arms and ammunition in its control and possession and a plan for depositing these arms and ammunition to the peace mission.
3. After the information referred to in 1 and 2 above has been given there will be a joint meeting of both delegations for formal acceptance of the plans with such modifications of them as may be necessary and to determine a date for complete execution of the plans, which should not be later than December 31, 1964.
4. The peace mission in due course will form a trust, which will be composed of representatives from both sides and the members of the peace mission, to take charge of the arms and ammunition, which will remain in the charge of the peace mission. The peace mission may take help from such quarters as it may consider necessary for their proper guarding and preservation.

The peace mission added that it was "of the opinion that renunciation of the use of armed force, such as proposed above, will be an example and encouragement to the people of the whole world."

Mr Gundevia replied on behalf of the Indian Government accepting in principle the practical plan, but making a few stipulations, such as: (a) the other side must first "account for" and place all its arms in the custody of the

peace mission before the Indian forces would begin to be withdrawn; (b) the internal security of the state would be the sole concern of the state Government of Nagaland which might decide to retain some battalions, in addition to its own Naga police, of the Assam Rifles (a part of the Indian security forces); and (c) Indian forces sufficient for the defence of the territory against external aggression would continue to be stationed in the state.

As will be seen, (c) was in consonance with the peace mission's own plan but (a) and (b) were not. Perhaps they had been added for purposes of bargaining and would have been withdrawn eventually if the plan had got off the ground. The real difficulty however came from the federal Nagas. They too in principle warmly welcomed the peace mission's plan, but after some semantic confusion in their reply had been straightened out by Michael Scott the whole scheme floundered on their demand that foreign observers be inducted to supervise the withdrawal of the Indian security forces. The idea of allowing foreigners to meddle in the internal affairs of the country was utterly repugnant to the Government of India, which had consistently maintained that Nagaland was an entirely domestic matter.

The federal Nagas on the other hand consistently endeavoured to "internationalise" their cause and to use India's acceptance of Mr Michael Scott on the peace mission as a lever to secure the direct involvement of more foreigners in their question. But the Government of India made it clear that its acceptance of Michael Scott under special circumstances should not be construed to mean that it had conceded the right of foreigners to interfere in a purely domestic matter. Michael Scott himself realised this, for he often said—once even to the press—that he could not imagine another government in the world letting a foreigner play such a part in its internal affairs as the Indian Government had allowed him to do.

But while ostensibly the "disarmament" proposal broke down on the question of foreign observers the

truth of the matter was entirely different. The armed group among the Naga underground—they call it the Naga army—seems to have rebelled against the proposal and threatened to arrest the Naga delegates to the peace talks. It was argued by them that once their arms had been handed over, even to the peace mission, there would be no force left behind their political case and they would be at an utter disadvantage at the negotiating table.

Arms and Armed Personnel

I have given so much space to this matter here because I feel strongly, and want it to be appreciated, that even now some manner of control of arms and armed personnel is essential for a peaceful settlement. Under the present conditions neither the Naga people nor the Naga leaders feel free to express their true thoughts and feelings. On the one hand the presence of the Indian security forces, even though confined within a thousand yards of their posts according to the ceasefire agreement, and on the other hand the unrestricted movement of Naga armed personnel in the villages in contravention of the ceasefire agreement, make them fearful and constrained. In these circumstances there is little or no possibility of a free and frank public debate. The federal Naga leaders no doubt assume that the entire Naga people are behind them; but except for certain emotive slogans it is doubtful whether the people would support them blindly when these slogans are spelt out in concrete political and economic terms. For my part I am confident that if the mission's peace proposals (as discussed below) had been put to the people in an atmosphere of freedom from fear they would have received overwhelming support.

III

Compromise—Another Precondition

This brings me to the second of the two preconditions

for a Naga settlement. I am convinced that a *peaceful* settlement in Nagaland has to be of the nature of a *compromise*. Neither side can get 100 percent of what it desires. The reason is that both sides have a part of the truth. Had one side been wholly right and the other wholly wrong there could have been no question of a compromise between right and wrong. But as both sides possessed a part of the truth it cannot be that one side should give up its truth while the other did not. In other words there cannot be a *peaceful* settlement between them except as a compromise. It was exactly this delicate and difficult task that was attempted in the peace mission's famous proposals of December 1964.

This is how the peace proposals described the Indian case:

> The Government of India's position...is that Nagaland formed an integral part of India before 1947 and that with the transfer of power to India by the British Parliament *Nagaland became part of India in the same way as all other States of India* (my emphasis). At the same time the Government of India accepts the need for granting the fullest autonomy to Nagaland, subject to the overriding consideration of maintaining the integrity of the Union, so as to ensure the fullest development of the Nagas and to guarantee their separate ethnic and cultural entity.

The Federal Naga case was described as below: The Nagaland federal delegation have stated that the Nagas had never been conquered by the Indian Army or ruled by an Indian Government although their territory had been forcibly annexed by the British Army and the British Government about a century ago. Nevertheless, their right of self-determination belonged to them separately as a people from the sovereign independent State of India, and they are now demanding recognition of this independence, which India herself demanded and heroically struggled for under the historic slogan *swaraj*.

These two positions appear to be far apart, yet the

peace mission believed that "with goodwill and understanding on both sides, a solution acceptable to both can be found." It indicated as hereunder the lines on which that could be done.

It began by expressing its full agreement with "the principle that all people have the right to self-determination." At the same time it invited "the attention of the Nagaland federal government to certain historical processes that had taken place to give birth to the Union of India and to the emergence of the great concepts and ideals underlying the Union Constitution."

Concept of Union Constitution

The peace mission went on to describe this historical process briefly: how the British "at several stages and in diverse manner had conquered various parts of the Indian subcontinent; how "under the aegis of the Indian National Congress, and since 1920, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, these various different peoples, representing diverse linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious elements, combined themselves against foreign colonial rule and developed a consciousness of nationhood ; how "due to the policy of isolation and exclusion, so deftly practised by the British rulers...this great national movement of unification which freed India, including Nagaland, from the yoke of foreign rule, did not bring within its embracing sweep the Naga population to the same extent as it did the other parts of the subcontinent; how in 1947, "when all the diverse peoples of India" voluntarily agreed to realise "for the common benefit of all the ideals of fraternity, liberty, justice and equality as enshrined in the constitution...the Naga people did not show the same response and sense of participation."

Having described the historical process, the peace mission went on to record its belief "that if the dissenting Nagas are invited to exercise their option to join this endeavour...the Nagas would most probably of their

own accord and volition be a consenting partner thereto ...Admittedly the Nagas would require various constitutional guarantees for the preservation of their religious belief, their geographical inheritance and other such vital matters, so that all their political aspirations are fully satisfied."

After thus indicating how a bridge could be built over the wide gulf that divided the two sides, the peace mission proceeded to make the following proposal, which is the kernel of the five-page document, known popularly as the peace proposals:

> The peace mission, in the pursuit of a settlement through peaceful means, to which the Government of India as well as the Nagaland federal government equally subscribe, would like both the Government of India and the Nagaland federal government to consider seriously whether a meeting point, as broadly envisaged above, between the two divergent positions could not be found. On the one hand the Nagaland federal government could of its own volition, on terms and conditions to be mutually agreed upon, decide to be a participant in the Union of India. On the other hand the Government of India could consider to what extent the pattern and structure of the relationship between Naga and the Government of India could be adapted and recast so as to satisfy all sections of Naga opinion.

The peace mission emphasised, and solemnly impressed upon the parties, that "the approach herein suggested is not only the fairest but the only practical one in the given circumstances."

Reactions to Proposals

Understandably, because of its intense dedication to the cause of peace in Nagaland, the first reaction available to the peace proposals was from the Nagaland Baptist Church. By a resolution its consultative committee gave its whole-hearted support to the proposals.

Unfortunately neither of the contending sides was prepared to enter into the spirit of the proposals. The Government of India's reply threw a rather large spanner into the works. It put a construction on the proposals that was contrary to their true meaning. It said it welcomed the conclusion of the peace mission "that a peaceful solution of the problem in Nagaland can only be found within the Indian Union, *by Nagaland continuing to remain within the Indian Union.*" (my emphasis). By using the words "by Nagaland continuing to remain within the Indian Union" it took away the option the peace mission had offered the dissident Nagas and thus destroyed the delicate bridge it had tried to build.

The Nagaland federal government naturally swung to the other extreme. It wanted the Government of India first to accept the unqualified and unlimited right of the Nagas to self-determination: only after that would they negotiate on Nagaland's relations to India. Thus we were back where we had started.

As for the common people of Nagaland, all the information that came to us indicated their satisfaction with the peace proposals, but they never had the chance to express their views in a free and unafraid manner.

Later the Government of India was prepared to state in writing that it was prepared to accept the peace proposals as a basis for further negotiations provided the other side was also prepared to do so. But that proved too late, and even though the peace mission appeared in person before the Tatar Hoho and explained the true import of their proposals they could not be persuaded. The deadlock so created has continued until now.

Delegation : Its Composition

Soon after the deadlock arose the Nagas announced that they would not talk unless the level of the Indian delegation was raised. That meant that they wanted the delegation to be led by a minister rather than an officer, no matter how high. Thus another deadlock ensued

which was broken only when the late Prime Minister Shastri agreed to meet them. Mr Shastri did not live to do so, but Mrs Gandhi met them in Delhi on February 18, 1966. Soon after the peace mission came to an end. Since then another meeting has taken place and the date of the third is being negotiated.

All this time the situation in Nagaland proper has been fairly normal despite occasional incidents. But in one of the three northern subdivisions (where also the ceasefire applies) of the erstwhile princely State of Manipur intermittent clashes between the Naga rebel forces and the Manipur Rifles have been occurring for several months, sometimes causing serious anxiety to all concerned. Broadly, the cause of it is lack of proper understanding of the terms of the ceasefire on the part of the Nagas, and lack of genuine acceptance of the ceasefire and the peace mission (when it existed) by the Manipur Government. In this critical area the observers have particularly played a significant part. But for their moderating efforts there might have been by now such an explosion there as to have blown up perhaps the entire structure of the truce and the peace talks.

IV

Right of Self-Determination

It is not because of their historical interest that I have discussed at such length the peace mission's proposals but because I still think that they indicate the only possible approach to a peaceful settlement. On one hand Government of India can never hope to persuade the federal Nagas that they are *already* a part of India: the problem rather is to persuade them to come in. For that the necessary psychological conditions must be created.

On the other hand the federal Nagas can never hope to persuade the Government of India to concede to them a full sovereign, independent status outside the Union. They must be willing, if they want a peaceful settlement,

to become participants in the Indian Union under terms and conditions they may negotiate.

Some sympathisers of the Naga cause tend to oversimplify the issue. They think that it is just a matter of applying the principle of self-determination; and when that is not done they end up by condemning India of neocolonialism. I wish it were as simple as that. There is hardly any nation on earth which is not multinational. If the abstract right of self-determination were applied universally I doubt whether many nations would survive the operation. That would lead to worldwide disintegration and become a terrible danger to peace and stability. For India, mindful of its past divisions and wounded deeply by partition, territorial integrity is a matter of life and death. Further, had Nagaland been the only area involved India might have taken the risk. But it hardly needs to be pointed out that what happens in Nagaland would affect the entire northeastern border of the country. That is a risk no nation should be asked to run. The right to self-determination is not an unlimited right. The International Court of Justice also has ruled so in the case of Finland versus Sweden.

The situation demands the highest qualities of leadership on both sides: courage, vision, a spirit of accommodation. The Government of India must go to the utmost limits to satisfy the aspirations of the federal Nagas and to remove their fears and suspicions. The Nagas on their part must indicate their willingness to opt for the Indian Union if they succeeded in obtaining from India terms satisfactory to themselves.

The plebiscite in the early 1960s under Mr Phizo's leadership might be held to be a barrier to such a *via media* settlement. But it should be realised that the issues posed today are radically different from those presented at that time to the people, and whatever agreement is reached between the two parties now could be submitted to a referendum, thus removing any possible feeling that the leaders had gone against the verdict of the people.

As I see it the present negotiations cannot get down

to brass tacks unless an atmosphere is created in which no one would fear to express his true opinions. For that it would be advisable to revive, as I had indicated earlier, the "renunciation of armed force" agreement. For the Nagas—all Nagas—the presence of Indian security forces on their soil is a source of irritation and fear. But while I am confident that Delhi could still be persuaded to withdraw its forces from all internal security duties that could never happen unless the arms of the Naga army are safely deposited in the custody of a body both sides trust. Such a body consisting of Indians and Nagas should not be difficult to set up. A step such as this would immediately clear the air and restore mutual confidence. To reassure the Naga army the agreement should provide that in the event of the negotiations failing it could take back all its arms without let or hindrance.

Simultaneously with the withdrawal of arms all Naga political prisoners should be set at liberty. Among other things the psychological effect of that should be of immense value.

British friends of India and of the Nagas have an important role to play here. This is just the occasion when the British genius for compromise may make an effective contribution.

At this critical juncture, when the doors to settlement are wide open and are being deliberately kept open by both sides, when contact at the highest political level has been established, when there is greater mutual understanding, when there is a truce and cessation of hostilities, when the Naga people are hungering for permanent peace and the universal cry is "peace and Naga unity," when the overground Nagas of all persuasions are ready for adjustment among themselves, when this most opportune moment is here it would be a thousand pities, an unmitigated tragedy, to let the opportunity slip and plunge the whole area again into turmoil and bloodshed.

CONCEPT OF NATIONHOOD

Joint Nationhood

A Socialist society cannot be created all at once. The present one is far removed from socialism. There must therefore be a period, short or long, of transition from the present to the ideal.

The forces driving society toward socialism are generated by the struggle of classes. It is not merely socialist intellectuals who by the powers of logic and persuasion bring about socialism. Socialist intellectuals play an important part in the process, but they do not provide the motive force. That force is provided by the working class and the other exploited classes in capitalist society who struggle against their exploiters in order to improve their position and to free themselves from exploitation.

This struggle leads them ultimately to destroy the social system that upholds and sanctions their exploitation and to establish a society free from exploitation, a socialist society. The intellectuals who identify themselves with the exploited class give ideological expression to this struggle and the objectives it drives at in more or less elevated manner. In brief the class struggle is the motive force in the transition to socialism.

Looked at as a historical process, this transition has two stages: one, the stage where the class struggle leads to the capture of power by socialists; the other, when the socialists in power build up socialism.

In theory state power can be captured by either of two methods: by an insurrectionary overthrow of the state in existence or by democratic means.

Democratic means can be used for the capture of state power only where full political democracy is func-

Extracts from an article entitled "Transition to Socialism" JP wrote soon after his release from prison in 1946

tioning and the working class has reached a high level of maturity and has created a powerful political party which succeeds in bringing under its influence the peasantry and the lower middle class. Where these conditions do not exist no compromise is possible. To say that without such a compromise freedom could not be won is a self-contradiction and underestimates grossly the strength of Indian nationalism.

The Right of Self-Determination

I am unable to find words adequate enough to express my sincere thanks to all of you, distinguished public figures in the life of your respective countries, to have responded to my invitation on behalf of the Indian Preparatory Bureau to this Convention. I join with the Chairman of the Reception Committee in according you all—delegates and observers—a most cordial and hearty welcome and offer my apologies for the many shortcomings that you must have found in the preparations we have made for your comfort and hospitality.

With your permission I shall take a few minutes of your precious time to tell you—by way of a brief introduction to the task before you here —how this Convention came to be convened and what is the nature of the issues before you.

WHEN CHINA INVADED Tibet in 1950 there was little information about what was actually happening. Nevertheless, even the meagre reports about China's armed intervention in Tibet brought forth spontaneous public indignation in this country. The affair, however, was hushed up at that time and some time later an agreement was signed between China and Tibet. It appeared that the wind had blown over. Public feeling in this country was not fully set at rest however and a certain uneasiness lingered in the minds of the people; and a sense of guilt gnawed at the hearts of some of us that India had lent its great moral support to the imperialist concept of suzerainty of one nation over another. There was also a serious doubt in our minds whether under Communist rule it could ever be possible for any country,

*Chairman's Speech at the Afro-Asian Convention on Tibet and against colonialism in Asia & Africa held in April 9, 1960, New Delhi

or region, to enjoy autonomy.

The State of uneasy calm lasted for a few years and then events erupted with a volcanic force and the Dalai Lama sought asylum in India. These quick moving events deeply stirred the people of this country whose spiritual and emotional bonds with Tibet were centuries old. As a consequence there were protest meetings all over the country and the Government and the people united in extending to His Holiness the Dalai Lama a warm and respectful welcome. On the crest of the upsurge of feeling an All India Convention on Tibet was held on May 30 and 31, 1959 at Calcutta, over which I had the honour to preside. That Convention, among other things, resolved that the President take steps to set up an Afro-Asian Committee to work for the cause of Tibet. Soon after, the Preparatory Bureau was formed which immediately set about to call this Convention. To this end the Bureau sent two of its representatives, Shri Samar Guha and Shri H.R. Pardiwala, to South East Asia and West Asia and Africa to meet leaders of public opinion and obtain their co-operation. It is a matter of great satisfaction that these efforts have at last borne fruit and we have gathered here from far and near to unite our efforts for the freedom of all nations, for international justice, for racial equality and for world peace.

AS YOU ALREADY KNOW from our circular letters, this Convention has been called in terms of the following resolution of the All India Tibet Convention:

".....This Convention is firmly of the opinion that the Tibetans have the same claim to the right of self-determination as any other nation of the world. Racially, linguistically and culturally different from the Chinese, they are a nation according to all standards of nationality. Although China claimed and intermittently exercise suzerainty over Tibet since the eighteenth century, that suzerainty was not based on the willing consent of the Tibetans, and they had virtually shaken it off in the second decade of this century. The Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1955 which re-imposed Chinese rule over Tibet

was the result of force and violence and lacked that basis of morality and law which springs from popular consent.

"After a careful consideration of all the relevant issues this Convention feels bound to place on record its protest against China for the denial of the fundamental human rights to the Tibetans, the violation of Agreement with Tibet, dated May 23, 1951, the ruthless suppression of the national uprising in that country, causing untold miseries and hardships to the people, and the destruction of Tibetan monasteries, involving loss of priceless treasures of art and manuscripts. This Convention repudiates the claim of China that she has a right to impose, by force, the so-called social, economic and scientific progress upon another nation, against its will, simply because she considers it backward and superstitious.....
.....This Convention authorises its President, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan to set up an Afro-Asian Committee on Tibet with a view, among other things: (1) to mobilise world opinion, particularly in Asian and African countries; (2) to arrange for appointment of an International Commission of neutral countries with a view to report on the alleged violation of human rights including the destruction of monasteries in Tibet."

Accordingly, our task here would be, first, to demand in unequivocal terms the right of self-determination to be allowed to the people of Tibet, and, second, to consider what steps should be taken now and from time to time to ensure the achievement of that goal. As for the commission of enquiry, the International Commission of Jurists has already undertaken the task, of which I shall speak later.

You also know that the scope of this Convention was subsequently widened at the suggestion of friends in West Asia and Africa to cover the whole anti-colonial struggle in these two continents. This is a colossal problem and we cannot deal with it in great detail. I am confident, however, that our deliberations and decisions here would contribute in some measure to the final and early defeat of colonialism in Africa and Asia. We have to consider

what steps would be taken in concert towards the goal.

You should, finally, consider if any permanent body should be set up at this Convention to work for the furtherance of the objects for which it has been called, and, if so, what should be its form, constitution and functions.

In order to help you in your deliberations, the Preparatory Bureau has succeeded in getting a number of brochures prepared and printed which you will find on the table before you. In addition, the Bureau is proud to place in your hands a Souvenir Volume of some distinction, prepared by one of the most distinguished Indian scholars on Tibet and Mongolia. There is also before you a copy of the most valuable Report of the International Commission of Jurists on the "Question of Tibet". We have also included in the published material a copy of the White Book on Tibet prepared by the Indian Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. I hope you will find all this material useful and valuable.

BEFORE I PROCEED to make my brief remarks about the issues before us, I should like to express my deep admiration for the noble martyrdom of the oppressed people of South Africa and to pay my sincere homage to them. As a humble follower of Mahatma Gandhi, I cannot but rejoice in the use of non-violent methods of resistance which must ultimately conquer race arrogance and hatred and inhumanity. The dastardly methods used by the White Government of South Africa have shocked the conscience of the world which cannot be thwarted long by legal quibbles from exerting its decisive influence against wrong and injustice.

Before I take up the question of Tibet let me make a few matters clear about this Convention.

First, I should like to emphasise the absolutely non-official character of this Convention. The Government of India has nothing whatever to do with it; and it is a tribute to the vitality of democracy in this country that a non-official function like this is possible to be held without the support or endorsement, indeed, under a certain degree of displeasure of the Government. It should like-

wise be emphasised that none of the delegations present here represent the Governments of their countries, nor anything said or done here by them would in any manner commit the Governments concerned. I should, however, add that some Governments at least have not hesitated to express their open sympathy for the Convention. Nonetheless, this Convention is a gathering of non-official leaders of public opinion of the countries of Asia and Africa who have met to take counsel and act together for the furtherance of their common ends of freedom, justice and peace.

It follows, that the Convention has nothing to do with the cold war or the world strategy of the two giant powers. Delegates attending this Convention might have their own views and sympathies in these matters. But, as far as this Convention is concerned, it has nothing whatever to do with any power *blocs* or their rivalries. The Convention will raise its voice against wrongs that have been or might be perpetrated by countries belonging to any power *bloc* whatever. At the same time, the Convention would steer, clear of such issues as alignment and non-alignment as being beyond its scope and purview. Clearly, delegates present hold different views on these questions. The important thing is that in spite of these differences they have come together to work for certain positive aims that they share in common.

I should like further to say that the Convention is not actuated by any hostile motives against any country. not even against China. Following Mahatma Gandhi, we are against the wrong and evil deed and not against the wrong or evil doer. Speaking entirely for myself, I should like to say that in spite of all that China has done I have no hostile or inimical feelings. But, for that reason, I cannot fail to raise my voice against the wrong that China, or for that matter any country, might commit, and to do all that might be civilly possible to have the wrong corrected. It is in that spirit that I have condemned and opposed China's forcible annexation of Tibet and the enslavement of a brave, peaceful and freedom-loving

people. Further more, I should like to stress that in trying to compel China to correct her wrong, we are serving China and not harming her. To some this might appear insincere but let it be recalled that it was exactly in that spirit that India's struggle for freedom was conducted by Mahatma Gandhi. China has wronged Tibet no doubt, but she also wronged herself. By freeing Tibet the people of China will also free themselves. It might be useful to remind the Chinese of these pregnant words of Karl Marx: "A people which enslaves others forges its own chains."

Lastly, I should like to point out that I have tried scrupulously not to mix up the Tibet issue with the Chinese aggression against our border. Let no one suppose that it is to avenge any wrong done to India that we have taken up the question of Tibet. That question was taken up by us long before the border aggression was known to have occurred and our stand in regard to it would have been the same if the latter had not happened, as it would remain the same even if the Sino-Indian dispute were to be settled.

LET ME NOW turn to Tibet. From the very start the Tibet question has appeared to me to be a rather simple affair. No doubt the question has been wrapped up in all manner of historical and legal controversies. But much of it has seemed beside the point to me.

I should like to divide the question into two parts: political and human. It is the second aspect of the question that has aroused world-wide sympathy and indignation. It was that aspect, you may recall, that received some grudging notice of the United Nations. But the political aspect of the question has far greater importance because the human aspect flows out of and is dependent upon it. Unless the political issue is settled, the human situation in Tibet cannot but move on from tragedy to tragedy.

Let me first deal briefly with the human aspect of the question. It seems incontrovertible that the Chinese Communist Government has used brutal and inhuman methods to suppress Tibet's national movement and is

bent upon putting down all resistance to its rule by every means, no matter how cruel or low. Having discovered that the Lamas and the monasteries and the Buddhist religion were uncompromising obstacles to their enslavement of Tibet, they are systematically undermining and destroying the Buddhist way of life and all its institutions. Mass killings have taken place and unspeakable atrocities have been committed. Millions of Chinese nationals have been settled in Tibet in a bid to alter for ever the Tibetan character of Tibet and convert it into a Chinese colony. All this is happening behind an impenetrable curtain, reinforced with lies.

Some time ago the International Commission of Jurists appointed a Commission of Investigation under the chairmanship of a distinguished Indian jurist, Shri Purshottam Trikamdas, to enquire into the Chinese atrocities. This Commission was denied access into Tibet by the Chinese Government, just as the U.N. Commission was denied access into Hungary. Nevertheless, the Commission is carrying on its investigations as best as it can. When the report of the Commission appears, the world would be in a better position to know the truth about Tibet. The material that has already come to light, however, is sufficient to convict China before the bar of world opinion of gross crimes of oppression and cruelty.

It is the political aspect of the Tibet question that has unfortunately been bogged down in the mire of controversy and diplomatic manoeuvring There are certain facts, however, that stand out as unchallengeable. There is no doubt that Tibet was and had always been a separate country and the Tibetans separate people, having their own history, culture and state. This fact is not controverted by the circumstances that in times of Chinese imperialist expansion, which more often than not was Mongolian or Manchu, i.e. non-Chinese, in character, Tibet came under some sort of Chinese suzerainty. It is also incontrovertible that in 1912 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama declared his formal independence from China and that until 1950 Tibet was, and functioned

as, an independent country. During this period the Tibet Government issued its own passports, maintained its own Post and Telegraphs, had its own currency. Again; during the whole Sino-Japanese war Tibet had maintained strict neutrality. All these were witnesses of sovereignty. The Report of the International Commission of Jurists puts the case rather succinctly in these words: "From 1912 to 1950 Tibet was virtually an independent country. No Chinese Writ ran in Tibet, there was no Chinese law, no Chinese judge, no Chinese policeman on the street corner; there was no Chinese newspaper, no Chinese soldier and even no representative of the Chinese Government." It is, further, beyond doubt that it was under duress that the Dalai Lama was compelled to assent to the so-called Sino Tibet Agreement of 1951. Lastly, events have proved beyond the shadow of doubt that the Tibetan people resisted in all possible manner the forcible imposition of Chinese rule and that the Dalai Lama fled to India when every hope of finding a *modus vivendi* with the Chinese was destroyed. There is enough evidence to show that the resistance has not died down yet.

These incontestable facts lead up to two incontestable conclusions; (1) Tibet was an independent country that has been forcibly annexed by China; (2) Tibet is entitled like any other nation to freedom and the right of self-determination.

The apologists of China will of course deny that Tibet has been annexed; She has been liberated, is their cry—Prime Minister Nehru's question, "Liberated from whom?' still remains unanswered. They also deny that Tibet can claim any right to self-determination and emphasise her backwardness to justify her "liberation". To all this hypocrisy and double-talk nothing can be a more devastating answer than the following ringing words of the famous Declaration made by Vladimir Lenin, Chairman of the Soviet People's Commissars, on the day the Bolsheviks took power:

"By annexation or seizure of foreign territory the Government...understands any incorporation of a small

and weak nationality by a large and powerful state..... *regardless also of how developed or how backward is the nation* forcibly attached or forcibly detained within the frontiers of the (larger) state.....

"If any nation whatsoever is detained by force within the boundries of a certain state, and if (that nation) contrary to its expressed desire—whether such desire is made manifest in the press, national assembly, party decision, or in protest and uprisings against national oppression—is not given the right to determine the form of its state life by free voting and completely free from the presence of troops of the annexing or stronger state and without the least pressure, then the adjoining of that nation by the stronger state is annexation, i.e., seizure by force and violence."

In connection with the question of the right of self determination it would be interesting and illuminating to recall to mind the following two declarations from two of the highest authorities of Communism.

Here is Lenin declaring:

"If Finland, if Poland, if the Ukraine break away from Russia, there is nothing bad about that. Anyone who says there is, is a chauvinist. It would be madness to continue the policy of Tsar Nicholas...No nation can be free if it oppresses other nation."

The following no less interesting declaration is from the constitution of the Kiangsi Soviet Republic drawn up by no less a person than its Chairman, Mao Tse-tung, in 1931:

"The Soviet Government of China recognises the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans and others living on the territory of China shall enjoy the full right to self determination, i.e., they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviets or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer."

It is a sad commentary upon the communist politics

of power that both in Russia and China these noble principles have been so cynically betrayed. The plain truth of the matter is that Communism is no longer a revolutionary creed and the Chinese Communists instead of being Marxist-Leninists have become Chinese chauvinists and imperialists.

In view of the facts I have stated and the unquestioned right of self-determination for all nations, it is too sad to find that, even outside the ranks of the apologists, the argument about Chinese suzerainty is trotted out to deny this birth-right to Tibet. It is sadder still to find countries that only recently fought for and won their independence taking shelter behind a moth-eaten, imperialistic formula to deny to Tibet what they had claimed for themselves. Overseas empires are perhaps easy to spot, but why should it be so difficult to discern the reality behind the land empires, whose contiguous territories create the illusion of a single nationhood?

AS AN INDIAN I cannot but deeply lament my country's part in the perpetuation of the fiction of Chinese suzerainty. It was said that we only followed the British policy in this regard. But the British policy was the child of imperialist machinations and was dictated more by the fear of Russian penetration than by any regard for China's rightful claim. Moreover, it is important to remember that British recognition of Chinese suzerainty was conditional upon the enjoyment of full autonomy by Tibet. According to the British formula China can have no recognizable right in Tibet if she refuses to respect her autonomy. There is some evidence that the British Government is doing some fresh thinking on the question. Perhaps a similar process had started in the United States and some other countries. Perhaps in New Delhi too second thoughts are being born. The Government of India's Note to China of February 12, 1960, referring to the Agreement of 1914, stated:

"This was not the first time that Tibet conducted negotiations and concluded treaties, in her own right with foreign states. On several occasions before 1914

Tibet had conducted negotiations and concluded treaties with other states. For example, Tibet concluded a treaty with Nepal in 1856 and another with Great Britain in 1904. These treaties were never objected to by China and were fully operative. At the Simla Conference, the Tibetan and Chinese plenipotentiaries met on an equal footing. This position was explicitly and unequivocally accepted by the Chinese Government. The three plenipotentiaries exchanged copies of their credentials at the first session of the conference on October 13, 1913. The credentials of the Tibetan representative issued by the Dalai Lama made it clear that Tibet was an equal party at the conference with the right 'to decide all matter that may be beneficial to Tibet,' and Chinese representative accepted the credentials of the Tibetan representatives as being in order. The credentials of the British Indian representative, which were also accepted by the Chinese representative, confirmed that all the three representatives were of equal status and that the conference was meeting, "to regulate the relations between the several Governments."

The only conclusion to be drawn from these facts should have been that Tibet was not a "region" of China but a separate country with its own separate Government that functioned on a basis of equality with the Chinese Government. However, it is not without significance that the Government of India has emphasized these facts, the logic of which it will have to accept sooner or later.

But, be that as it may, it does not follow that since Britain and India are the two countries most concerned with the question of Tibet their lead in the matter should necessarily be followed by other countries. It can be argued with great force that just because these two countries have their past commitments, the other should judge the question on its merits and come to independent decisions. After all, that is the implication of the policy of non alignment and independence of judgment. There cannot be any question of any one embarrassing any one else. Once we get started in that direction we are bound

to land ourselves soon in the cold war. I should like therefore to plead as strongly as possible for a fresh and independent approach to be made to the question. Incidentally, that might make it possible for India and Britain to extricate themselves from the complications and embarrassments in which they find themselves.

These days when the world is looking with such hope to the forthcoming Summit Conference, there is an anxiety to avoid doing anything likely to spoil the atmosphere. While this anxiety is understandable, it must be clearly realised by all concerned that any hush hush policy in regard to international wrongs would be sure in the end to defeat the very purpose for which the summit leaders are to meet. Any attempt by the great powers to divide the world between themselves and to establish peace on the foundation of mutual acceptance of their respective areas of influence would be bound to meet with disaster.

There is also a good deal of talk about disarmament. This must be welcomed, but at the same time, it must be understood that honest disarmament must spell the end of colonialism of every form. Disarmament and the right of self determination for every nation must go hand in hand together. International peace and international justice are only the two sides of the same coin.

TO SOME PERSONS it appears futile even to think about Tibet any more. Tibet to them is an accomplished fact which is regrettable and all that, but yet something about which nothing further could be done. Such are the men who unwittingly, yet constantly, are undermining the foundations of the moral society which alone could guarantee peace to the world. They are the worldly wise, who, by their lack of courage and faith, block the progress of the human race, not towards the moon but towards humanity itself. These persons have myopic view and forget that nothing stands, or can stand still in history—not even the Chinese empire.

The world is no longer a jungle in which tooth and claw are the final arbiters. Slowly, but surely, a world order is

arising, based not on might but on right. The vision is yet far away, but its outlines are slowly emerging from the darkness.

Mr. Nikita Khruschev of Russia goes around the world impressing upon everyone that history was on his side and that communism was the ultimate destiny of mankind. The Russian leader does not realise how out-dated he has already become and how in his own country the human spirit is asserting itself and the faint rays of a new enlightenment have begun to pierce through the pervading darkness. History, will soon prove that communism, instead of being the final flowering of human civilization, was a temporary aberration of the human mind, a brief nightmare to be soon forgotten. Communism, as it grew up in Russia and is growing up in China now, represent the darkness of the soul and imprisonment of the mind, colossal violence and injustice. Whoever thinks of the future of the human race in these terms is condemning man to eternal perdition. It is not the cold war, or the economic war, that will spell the ultimate defeat of communism; it is rather the working of the human spirit. The process of the overcoming of communism, as of every other system of oppression, is a duel one: (a) resistance to oppression by its victims, and (b) the growth of enlightenment among the oppressors themselves. Apart from the rays of light in Russia, the fact that there are communist countries like Yugoslavia and Poland adduces further proof of the second. The Chinese are also human and there is reason to believe that a time will soon come when there will be many souls amongst them that might be revolted by oppression and injustice and might want to correct the wrongs of their predecessors.

On the other hand, the forces of freedom and nationalism that are growing in all the subject countries will play their role in the liberation of mankind and destruction of all vestiges of oppression of every kind. As President Nasser told the Indian parliament the other day, "the good forces in the world will get stronger every day to play their role in removing the remnants of injustice

still lurking in some parts of the globe."

Therefore, friends, there is hope for Tibet and hope for all the oppressed nations of the world, because there is hope for freedom, justice and peace.

We have gathered here to kindle this hope to devise ways, and means to see it realised in Tibet and elsewhere. The very fact that this gathering has taken place will be a source of hope to all those brave people throughout Asia and Africa who are fighting for their rights and particularly to the people of Tibet. I hope this Convention will unequivocally proclaim the right of the Tibetan people to freedom and self determination and respectfully urge upon all the nations of the world to lend their moral and political support to the cause of Tibetan independence. It was a matter of gratification that the issue of violation of human rights was raised at the U.N. but, at the same time, it was also a matter of deep regret that many nations of Africa and Asia had abstained from expressing their views. I hope subsequent events and a better appreciation of the realities of the situation will change this sorry state of affairs and African and Asian governments, or at best those amongst them that value freedom and justice, will take a more positive line when the question comes up before the U.N. again. It is wrong politically and ethically to turn the back on Tibet on the ground that it is a domestic or internal question of China. The question of Tibet's freedom is as much an international question as that of Algeria or Kenya or the Congo. A declaration to this effect by this Convention should go a long way in removing the cobwebs of confusion surrounding this matter.

I AM CONSCIOUS that I have taken up too much of your time and have spoken about Tibet at some length. I shall not attempt to say much about the general problem of colonialism in Asia and Africa because I do not find myself competent to do so. As far as Asia is concerned the open form of political imperialism has become almost a thing of the past. There are little pockets like Goa in India, some islands in Indonesia, where imperialism

lingers on, but for the rest it has passed into history. More subtle forms of economic imperialism perhaps still survive over large parts of Asia, but here too a slow process of transformation is visible.

Africa, however, is in the throes of revolutionary upheaval which is bound to change the face of that mighty continent and affect the course of world history. Several countries of Africa have but recently won their independence and taken their rightful place in the comity of nations. Several others are scheduled to achieve their freedom within this year. To them we offer our congratulations and salutations. But there are others, like Algeria, where the prospect looks depressing. But I am confident that before long the sufferings and struggles of these nations too would be crowned with success and they also will take the rightful place in the family of free nations. To these brethren-in-struggle we offer our full moral support and invoke for them the political support of all Governments of the world. At this Convention we have to consider what concrete steps might be taken by us to help these brethren to achieve their goal.

As you know the freedom struggle in Africa is complicated by the problem of race conflict on account of white and other non-African settlers. This is a matter of the utmost delicacy, because, no matter what forms these conflicts take and how long they last, the races concerned have to live together now and ever in the future. The manner in which the south African Government is behaving is bound to create an almost unbridgeable gulf between people whose destinies history has tied together. I hope, however, that the non-violent sufferings of the African people will ultimately produce a change of heart, as it already seems to have done among European and American whites. Ultimately, the principles of race equality and democracy must triumph and the African people must come into their own and exercise their full democratic rights and privileges.

Before concluding let me express the hope that this Convention might prove to be a new bridge between

the peoples of our two continents and it might create a new instrument of communication between ourselves, without the natural impediments that stand in the way of official representatives of organizations. We have so much in common and our future is so linked together that the more opportunities we have of coming and working together, the more easily shall each of our countries march to its appointed goal.

I again offer you all my most cordial welcome.

Origin of a Nation

The question of national integration has been much to the fore in recent months. It is one of the highest aspirations—if not the highest—of the Indian people to become an integrated and strong nation. This aspiration was expressed most authoritatively at the National Integration Conference held in September-October 1961 in New Delhi. There is a strong feeling in the country that our very future as a people would be brought into question if this task of nation-making was not properly and speedily fulfilled.

If becoming a nation is of such vital importance it behoves us to take a closer look at the phenomenon of nationhood. First, it has been found to be extremely difficult to define precisely what a nation is. The word has a long history and its meaning has undergone a considerable process of evolution. I am indebted to Fredrick Hertz's *Nationality in History and Politics* (*London, 1957*) for what follows.

Originally *natio* meant a backward tribe. Civilised peoples, as of Greece and Rome, called themselves *gens* or *populus*. At the beginning of the Middle Ages the word nation was used in Germany and France to designate the higher ruling class in opposition to the *volk* or *peuple*. In former times the chieftain of an Irish clan was called "captain of his nation." The meaning of the word gradually evolved in Western usage and came generally to refer to a free, self-governing people or a people constituted as a state.

The definition, as will be seen, is not entirely satisfactory because many states are composed of different

*Dadabhoy Nowrojee Fund Lecture Series

nations or nationalities. The Scots and Welsh, for instance, regard themselves as nations though they live in a common state with the English. Over 70 nationalities live together in the Soviet Russian state.

Origin of a Modern Nation

In the long history of our country there is no word or concept found to correspond with the modern concept of nationality. And this brings me to the second point I wish to make about the modern nation: namely that whatever the long history of the word the nation in its modern sense is comparatively of recent origin.

Some of the elementary traits of nationality, writes Hertz, may be as old as humanity, but the "more complicated phenomena have gradually arisen at different times." While it is not possible to state definitely when nationality as we know it today was born, it would not be wrong to say that the second half of the 18th century saw its first beginnings. The 19th was *par excellence* the century of nationalism.

The scene of this new development in human history was Western Europe. Why should it have been so is not very clear. For the present let it suffice to point out that it was not as if human society had to reach a "higher" stage of civilisation to give birth to the modern nation. To quote Hertz again: "India, China and the Islamic peoples brought forth great and comparatively homogenous civilisations, but the idea of modern nationality was alien to them before they were permeated by European ideas." "In Europe itself," Hertz goes on to say, "ancient Greece or medieval Italy and Germany possessed very high civilisation while there was hardly any national solidarity between the different peoples into which each was divided. A high level of civilisation was even adverse to national unity on a wide scale. Athens, Florence and Nuremberg were proud of the splendour of their own achievements and looked down upon their backward kinsmen in other cities. . . . History shows that the progress

of civilisation was often accompanied by a weakening of national sentiments."

Origin of Nation

If then it was not the progress of civilisation that produced modern nations, what were the forces that brought them into being? I shall presently examine this question. For the moment it would be helpful to keep in mind that to be a nation does not necessarily mean to be terribly civilised. Let us keep in mind that while civilisation is an end desirable in itself, nationalism can only be a means to an end.

I should like now to consider with you some of the common characteristics of modern nationhood and apply them to our own. Scholars have distinguished between legal and social or political nationhood or nationality. The first is the objective and the second the subjective aspect of nationalism. Legally or objectively considered, a nation usually has three essential attributes: (a) a well-defined territory that it calls its own; (b) political unity represented by a common state to which all citizens owe allegiance; (c) recognition by other nations, and by international law, as a distinct, sovereign nation. A legally defined nation might well be composed of a number of nations which in some respects consider themselves distinct from one another but yet accept willingly a common state.

Nation and State

How a nation comes to be associated with a certain territory—and therefore with the corresponding state—depends upon a complex of factors, often on accidents of history, including the accident of leadership. The process is well illustrated in the case of our own nation. Incidentally an examination of the process might help in overcoming the psychosis from which many in this country suffer as a result of partition.

First of all let us remind ourselves that until the experience of British rule we were never a nation in the modern sense of the term. Undoubtedly there was an indefinable unity in which our ancestors shared. There was even the territorial concept of the land of Bharat, Bharatvarsha, which was bounded in the north by the Himalayas and in the south by the seas. But that sense of unity so eloquently spoken by Rabindranath was not a nationalistic sentiment but a spiritual and cultural sentiment that was based upon a common outlook on life, "unity of spirit" as Tagore called it, and a common pattern of social living.

It was only when British rule was established over the entire length and breadth of the country that India was united politically under one government. That political unity was however imposed from above and did not in itself constitute nationhood. It was in the process of opposition to this imposed rule that Indian nationalism took its birth.

An interesting point that might be raised here is whether the reaction to British rule would have been the same, that is to say nationalistic in the modern sense, if Great Britain had not been transformed meanwhile into a nation. Is it not reasonable to suppose that if Elizabethan England for instance had conquered the whole of India, opposition to it—successful or otherwise—would have followed the traditional dynastic pattern rather than the modern nationalistic one.

Two-Nation Theory

Be that as it may, Indian nationalism grew up as a reaction to aggressive British nationalism. But unfortunately it was not strong enough to weld together psychologically all the people of India into one nationality. The result was that almost on the eve of independence there arose a new concept of nationality which challenged the older one. We all recall with a twitch of the heart that tragic clash between the two-nation and one-nation

theories. The two-nation theory was undoubtedly ill-conceived and ill-founded, because if the history of national origins and growth proves anything it is that religion alone never determines nationality.

A combination of factors however conspired and India was partitioned. But the two nation theory did not have an unqualified victory. It had proclaimed that the Hindus and Muslims were two distinct nations which must live separately in their own sovereign nation-states. But in the event vast numbers of people belonging to these socalled nations were left behind on either side of the partition. In sober contemplation the partition of India would appear to have been a clumsy device which settled nothing and satisfied none. If we add to that the holocaust, the misery and suffering, the moral degradation and debasement which followed it one cannot but be appalled at the historic folly.

It is not however to lament a historical fact that I have brought up the question here. My purpose is to demonstrate how a turn of history can be responsible for the delimitation of "national" territory and how there is nothing immutable or sacrosanct about it. It is quite conceivable that partition could have been avoided even with the consent of all concerned, and where there are two nations today there might have been only one.

The role of events of history in giving rise to nations might be appreciated even better if we consider what might have been the situation if Britain or any other foreign nation had never established its rule over India and forcibly unified the country. The Mughal Empire, which in any case never extended to the whole of India, was breaking up. Marathas, Sikhs, Rajputs, Tipu Sultan and lesser persons and groups were contending among themselves for supremacy.

Can it be said with any assurance that there would have been today a single national state in India, or at any rate not more than two? Those who talk sentimentally about undivided India might give serious thought to this question and also not forget the fact that the political

divisions and the struggle for power of those days rarely followed religious or communal lines. True, there did exist a degree of cultural "unity" in Hindu society at that time. There was also, it is true a discernible process afoot towards a cultural synthesis between the Hindu and the Muslim ways of life. But the history of Western Europe has shown that cultural unity does not necessarily lead to a single national state. So while it is difficult to say with any assurance what would have happened if the British had not brought the whole of India under one government it is a sobering experience to realise that undivided India would have been perhaps one of the lesser possibilities. This thought should bring some solace to those who even now eat out their hearts over partition and consider it their patriotic duty to undo it.

I shall go further and say that this thought should help cure that psychosis of which I spoke earlier—the hidden disease of the present-day Indian mind, compounded of suppressed pain, anger and frustration, that partition caused. That pain, anger and frustration could be sublimated if we took a healthy and realistic view of our history and understood its true message and significance.

Crux of a Nation

Let me proceed now with the discussion of the characteristics of nationhood. Experience has shown that legal nationality is not enough. A nation might have its state and well-defined territory and yet lack the substance of nationality. That substance is defined as "national consciousness' or "national sentiment." "Without a sufficient measure of this consciousness," says Hertz, "there is no nation." When we speak of national integration in our own country, we mean precisely the development of this very consciousness of nationality.

But this consciousness or sentiment is an exceedingly elusive thing, and whether or not a specific people possess it in sufficient degree is very difficult to determine. It is

a product of varied historical experience, which is seldom the same for every nation. It is therefore difficult to generalise and lay down prescriptions on how to develop national consciousness. It would be interesting to quote here from Hertz two views of two distinguished Europeans on the question. John Stuart Mill "saw the essence of nationality in the mutual sympathy of its adherents and in their desire to be united under a government of their own, produced through a community of history and politics and through feelings of pride and shame, joy and grief connected with experiences of the past." According to Ernest Renan, the great French philosopher and author of the famous *Life of Jesus*, "it is not race, religion, language, state, civilisation or economic interests that make a nation." "The national idea," according to him "is founded on a heroic past, great men, true glory. Common experience leads to the formation of a community of will. More than anything else it is common grief that binds a nation together, more than triumphs. A nation, therefore, is a great solidarity founded on the consciousness of sacrifices made in the past and on willingness to make further ones in the future. The existence of a nation resembles a plebiscite repeated every day."

These are illuminating visions, but they also show the complexity of the matter. In the course of our long history much community of experience has been accumulated. We shared much joy and grief, pride and shame. But apparently there has not been enough of it to create among us in sufficient measure a consciousness of nationality; otherwise there would not have been such deep concern now over the question of national integration. As a matter of fact, there were elements in our community of experience which acted as barriers to integration, and even led to actual disintegration as in the case of partition. Moreover there are certain experiences such as sharing grief or glory which cannot be made to order.

National Consciousness: a Basic Ingredient

Before I proceed further with the question of developing national consciousness, the most essential prerequisite of national integration, I should like to turn to the question put earlier, namely what were the historic forces which brought the modern nation into being? Nationalism is now a worldwide phenomenon, and we see nations being born before our eyes as it were as in Africa. It was not through one and the same process however that they all came into existence.

Broadly speaking, the existing nations can be divided into two classes. In one class would be those which became nations through an autonomous process, that is to say as a result of forces which grew up within their own areas. These might be called the "original" nations. The other class of nations arose as a "reaction" to the original nations. This reaction was of two kinds because it took place in two different sets of circumstances.

In the older feudal empires such as those of the Hapsburgs and the Czars in which a ruling dynasty kept under subjugation different peoples the reaction was that of quickening of "national" consciousness, which in turn expressed itself in a demand for "national" freedom. The other type of reaction occurred among the colonial peoples the newly established nation states had conquered. This reaction, of course, took time to materialise because the necessary conditions had to develop in the feudal and primitive societies before national sentiments could be born.

The point I wish to emphasise here is that the growth of nationalism in both the old feudal and the new colonial empires could not have been possible unless the new phenomenon of modern nations and nation-states had become manifest. I am not suggesting that before that there used to be no reaction to conquest and subjugation. My point is that in former days the reaction used to take the traditional form of dynastic opposition or that of just a people, not a nation in the modern sense, rising

against the conqueror or oppressor.

Revolutionary Developments

How then did modern nationalism originally come into existence? To my mind it arose *mainly* on account of two revolutionary developments in Western Europe: one, the French Revolution, the other the Industrial Revolution. France and England naturally became the original models of modern nationhood. The French Revolution was mainly a social revolution, while the Industrial Revolution was mainly of a scientific-cum-technological nature. The first laid down the political base and the second created the economic framework of the modern nation-state.

The French Revolution accomplished two revolutionary tasks: it revolutionised totally the old concept of power and sovereignty, and it carried out the new revolutionary concept dramatically into decisive section. Until the French Revolution the accepted view at any rate in Europe was that both power and sovereignty resided in the king. It was not possible under that kind of political ideology and system for modern nationalism to be born.

Kings and nobles, while they ruled over their kingdoms and principalities, were rather cosmopolitan in their sympathies and outlook as Elie Kedourie has pointed out in his *Nationalism* (London, 1960), and though they often fought among themselves they were tied to one another by marriage and traditional feudal ties. The people over whom the princes ruled were so kept out of the politics of the day and were therefore so apolitical that they just could not come to acquire national consciousness, which is a political sentiment.

The French Revolution completely changed all that. It proclaimed that power and sovereignty resided in, and were derived from the people, More important than that it demonstrated that the people could assert their sovereignty and overthrow the power of kings and esta-

blish their own. The people were thus drawn into the vortex of politics and come to be closely associated with the state. At that point the feudal state began to be transformed into a nation-state and the people into a modern nation. The economic forces that the commercial and industrial revolutions had simultaneously set in motion completed the process. They had indeed contributed in no small measure to the political revolution itself. It need hardly be pointed out that the economic and political forces constantly act and react on each other, and only for the purpose of analysis can they be separated.

Rise of Middle Class

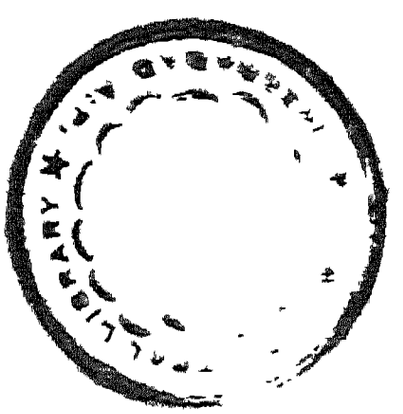
The Industrial Revolution created a fairly large middle class which found it necessary to use the established state directly or indirectly to protect and expand its economic interests. This further strengthened the association of the people with the state. It was soon found that the economic interests of the new Industrial-cum-commercial class was distinct from the interests of other states and their peoples. The cosmopolitan, or at any rate extraterritorial, outlook of the feudal ruling class came in time to be replaced to a narrow nationalistic outlook. While the rise of industrialism brought into being narrow nationalism, within the national territory it helped erase parochialism and localism. The second process was of vital importance to the growth of the modern nations. Thus the exigencies of history which determined the territorial limits of a nation and the political and economic changes brought about by the two revolutions together created modern nationalism. Undoubtedly other factors played a part, but not to my mind the same decisive part that these three played. In fact, the first factor, the exigencies of history, would include many other factors as I have already pointed out.

What has already been said should be enough to show that it is not such a wonderful thing to be a nation

as is usually imagined. If a balance sheet is drawn the following would be the credit and debit sides respectively:

1. Uniting or integrating force: tribalism, ruralism merged into nationalism.	1. Divisive forces have sharpened divisions between one nation and another.
2. Growth of civil society inside	2. Intense hostility towards other nations and internal wars.
3. Growth of equality—economic, social and political, etc.	3. Exploitation, conquest etc of one nation by another.

Let us look at our task in this perspective. Two of our great teachers and leaders—Tagore and Gandhi—have given us a vision of nationalism that is based on that "unity of spirit which makes of the entire human race one single nation of man.



National Integration: Its Essential Requisits*

Nationhood is a rather recent social phenomenon. The modern nations are hardly more than a couple of centuries old. None of them was created in a day. The process of national integration was rather protracted, and not infrequently included phases of civil war. In the modern sense of the term, India was never a nation, nor is a nation today, nor can suddenly become one tomorrow. The process of integration will take time here as elsewhere. It might be shortened by wise leadership or bedevilled by narrowness and stupidity. Happily the National integration Council has given a wise lead in the matter.

Nationhood is made up of tangible and intangible elements, the latter constituting much the larger part of it. The most essential tangible elements of nationhood are :

(a) a well-defined territory;
(b) political unity represented by
  (i) a constitution (written or unwritten);
  (ii) a common citizenship;
  (iii) a government with authority over the entire national territory and power to deal with other nations;
(c) In multilingual nations a workable medium or media of communication between the constituent units.

The Indian nation has all these elements, though in respect to (c) the situation is in the natural process of evolution.

The intangible elements however really make for

**India Quarterly* Vol XVII, No 4, December 1964

nationhood. These elements may be expressed in terms of attitudes of mind as below:

(a) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for every citizen to regard loyalty to the nation as being above group or sectional loyalties;

(b) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for every group or section of the nation to subordinate its interests to national interests;

(c) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for the nation to think of the interests of every citizen and of every group and section of the nation.

National integration would mean in substance the creation of the above attitude of mind. These attitudes are largely absent at present.

Psychological Requisites

There is no single or simple answer to the question how these psychological requisites of nationhood can be produced. Different approaches will have to be made from different sides. The statement of the National Integration Conference emphasises some of those approaches. I am sure there will be many others. The process, as I have said above, will be long and arduous.

As matters stand there is one serious obstacle to the process of psychological integration. In a vast country like ours with so many diversities it is natural that there should be all manner of disputes, discords and differences. We would be more than human if it were not so. Even among the peoples of well-integrated nations there are internal differences and disputes: political, economic, social, racial, religious, linguistic, etc. Even among blood brothers misunderstandings and quarrels take place. If the condition precedent to national integration is complete harmony and accord among all individuals, groups and sections making up the Indian nation we might well have to wait until doomsday.

I do not mean to suggest that the existence of disputes and discord is a matter which should not receive serious attention, and that every effort should not be made to settle them. Nor do I mean to say that they do not obstruct the process of integration. But I do wish to stress that it should be remembered that even after the best efforts disputes and the like will remain. When differences occur in a small family, a vast family of 400 million cannot conceivably be free from them.

It is not the existence of disputes and quarrels that so much endangers the integrity of the nation as the manner in which we conduct them. We often behave like animals. Be it a village feud, a students' organisation, a labour dispute, a religious procession, a boundary disagreement or a major political question, we are more likely than not to become aggressive, wild and violent. We kill and burn and loot and sometimes commit even worse crimes. When an Indian does such things to another Indian the psychological integration of Indians becomes a rather distant dream. When brothers quarrel and decide peacefully to separate they still remain brothers. But when they quarrel and draw out their swords and strike each other their brotherhood is at an end.

Likewise when Indians kill Indians and burn and loot, as happened at Jabalpur and Aligarh, and earlier on even a larger scale in Assam, the resulting hatred, suspicion, and ill-will create a psychological estrangement which makes it difficult for them to feel that they all belong to one another as citizens of the same nation. On the other hand no matter what, and however serious, the quarrel, if every citizen takes a vow never to resort to violence the mere fact of the quarrels and disagreements will not do so much damage to the process of integration.

Peace Pledge Campaign

Following this line of thinking I proposed on behalf of the Sarva Seva Sangh to the National Integration

Conference that a campaign, which might be called the citizens' peace pledge campaign, should be launched under its aegis to obtain signatures or thumb impressions on a pledge to keep peace. In that connection I also pointed out that while there was a good deal of talk in the country about nonviolence we had far to go to establish a civil society.

A society of nonviolence is far more difficult to achieve than a civil order of society. Nonviolence requires the elimination of inequality and exploitation and the positive quality of love as the basis of social relations. A civil society is chiefly distinguished—though it has other characteristics too—by general acceptance of the rule that disputes between individuals or groups should be settled by peaceful means. Thus the peace pledge campaign would also help us forward towards the goal of a civil order of society.

I am happy that the Prime Minister and the conference took kindly to the suggestion of the Sarva Seva Sangh and incorporated it in the statement that was issued. This is what the statement said:

> The Conference welcomed the suggestion made by the Sarva Seva Sangh for launching a mass campaign for a pledge to be signed by every adult Indian to affirm his faith in the universal principle of civilised society to settle disputes by peaceful means and to abstain from resorting to physical violence in disputes with fellow citizens of India.

The Serva Seva Sangh had suggested the following pledge, which too was endorsed by the conference and included in the statement:

> I, as a citizen of India, affirm my faith in the universal principle of civilised society, namely that every dispute between citizens or groups or, institutions or groups of citizens, should be settled by peaceful means; and in view of the growing danger to the integrity and unity of the country I hereby pledge myself never to resort to physical violence in the case of any dispute, whether in my neighbourhood or in any other part of India.

It is now for the Council for National Integration to consider the matter in detail and chalk out a practical programme. While it was desirable, and in a way inevitable, that the council should be presided over by the Prime Minister and that the Chief Ministers preponderated in it; such a composition robs it of independent initiative. Because of the preoccupations of these members the council has not been able as yet to hold a single meeting since it was constituted. I hope everybody agrees that the work of the council should not be made to wait upon the convenience of persons engaged in other work, no matter how important.

Meanwhile I should like to make one or two further observations on the subject. I have been asked whether merely signing a pledge would prevent people from committing violence. The answer is obviously no. But there can be no doubt that a nationwide campaign of the kind in which all party leaders and leaders of other walks of life join cannot but create a powerful psychological climate which will have great educative value.

I suggest further that we might copy the Independence Day programme of preindependence days. It will be recalled that on January 26 every year the whole country celebrated Independence Day, when the pledge was taken in tens of thousands of meetings all over the country. The practice was for the president of the meeting to read the pledge and the audience would follow him. It used to be rather impressive and effective.

A similar procedure might be adopted for the peace pledge campaign. Until the elections are over no national campaign of the order contemplated is feasible. I therefore suggest that a national week, the week from April 6 to 13, be fixed for the proposed yearly campaign and a genuine effort made to make it a truly mass campaign. In that week not only will mass meetings be held where the peace pledge will be collectively administered but simultaneously a door-to-door signature campaign will

be conducted.

It is sometimes asked who will do all this colossal work. This question is symptomatic of the decline of public life and activity after independence. I am sure there will be no dearth of volunteers if a proper lead is given and the required psychological climate created. It seems to me that the President and the Prime Minister should themselves lead the campaign and go on April 6—if the Council for National Integration accepts my proposal—from door-to-door to obtain at least 11 signatures each.

Needless to say workers of the Sarva Seva Sangh, including thousands of khadi workers all over the country, will be in the front rank of the volunteers. If the leaders of the political parties took this up seriously there would be thousands of workers more. There are the village panchayats and the panchayat samitis, there are the schools and colleges, there are the numerous voluntary organisations of every kind. It should not be difficult for all this tremendous force to be organised and galvanised for this great national service.

Aggressive Nationalism: A Danger to the World

I am sorry that among the audience there is so much difference of opinion regarding the language in which I ought to speak. I must say that this growing habit among us of imposing our views on others is not conducive to democracy. Though we have accepted a democratic constitution and a democratic governmental set-up most of us are unaware of the significance of these institutions.

A democratic way of life means tolerance of other people's opinions which must receive full and free expression. Otherwise true democracy cannot function. Some people all over the country are constantly trying to prevent me from expressing my views, and while they deny me the right to speak out for myself they themselves are making all kinds of propaganda to turn my countrymen against me.

Of course I don't want to give this undue importance as I do not really believe that anyone can stop me from doing what I feel I ought to do. I have decided to serve my country in my own light till my last day, and this I will do even if it costs me my life or even if everybody forsakes me. And for this cause I shall not flinch from telling the truth as I see it.

I request you to dwell dispassionately on the problems which face us today. As a Hindu, I feel that two courses are open to us today: the one that was shown by Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudeva Tagore, and the other that of Godse, the murderer of Gandhi. Will you pause and think for once which one you are going to follow, I asked students at a Bangalore meeting the other day. Un-

*Published in the *Radical Humanist* June 20, 1965

fortunately a very few among us today believe in the course shown by Gandhiji and the atmosphere is charged with hatred and violence.

I must warn you that if these few sane voices don't raise their united protest now it will soon be too late because fascistic tendencies are growing very fast indeed. I am really amazed that in such a mad atmosphere Maitreyi Devi and a handful of her colleagues are functioning at all and are able to organise a convention like this. This effort cannot be praised enough.

Gurudev's Concept of Nationalism

Here I must speak a few words about nationalism and national self-respect. I was reading Gurudev's *Nationalism* once again and I was amazed by the breadth of vision that he showed about 40 years back. He realised clearly that the aggressive nationalism which he saw in all the Western countries then was spreading disaster for the human race and therefore visualised a way out of this vicious atmosphere in the acceptance of internationalism as a higher goal. He abhorred chauvinism and jingoism and preached world brotherhood

Mahatmaji used to say: "I am a nationalist, but my nationalism is neither narrow nor aggressive." We are living in a time when nationalism, as we practise it, creates more problems than it solves. A few days ago I went to Delhi and, my God, everybody was talking of war with Pakistan. The Capital was seized by a war hysteria. I wondered what had happened to this country and I tried to argue with some. I asked them: "Have you ever given any thought to what will happen to us if we declare war on Pakistan to solve this border dispute? What will happen to our economic plans, our democracy and our nonalignment". A false sense of self-respect should not lead us to a suicidal war with Pakistan.

Casteism

Think over the problem of national integration too.

The two biggest communities in India, the Hindus and the Muslims, have been living side by side for centuries now. What must we do to solve the conflicts which so often take place between them? Adoption of a secular and democratic constitution is only one step towards the solution of that problem. The letters of the constitution have to be made real in our life. I come from a state where the evils of casteism are more rampant than communalism. We have so many kinds of conflicts within the Hindu community itself, another example of which is the conflict between Brahmins and non-Brahmins.

We are far from achieving that integrity and unity which is the ideal of our nationhood. These fundamental problems cannot be solved through excitement, shouting of slogans or fighting among ourselves. It is a nation-building task which needs constant persuasion and infinite patience; it needs idealism as well as self-sacrifice. If our life is demanded for this ideal we have to give it as Mahatmaji gave his. I must appeal to you, rather suggest to you, to give serious thought to this problem, the purpose for which this conference has been organised. Harmony is bound to prevail if we are ready to give sincere thought and effort to solving the communal problem. If this movement spreads from here over the country once again the truth of the statement will be proved that what Bengal thinks today India thinks tomorrow.

Role of News Media

But to be able to solve the problem we must face the truth squarely and coolly. We should not delude ourselves with fiction. If you put the newspapers of Calcutta or Delhi and of Dacca or Karachi side by side and read them you will think the world has gone mad. Both sets of newspapers are warmongers, and each is constantly blaming the other for this. We always delude ourselves with the thought that the source of all our communal conflicts is in Pakistan, and communal riots start here

only as a reaction to communal atrocities in Pakistan. But what about the reaction in Pakistan to happenings here ?

I was against the partition of this country from the very beginning. Our socialist group and myself tried to prevent partition till the last day though almost the entire country wanted it. I mention this today because I want to remind you that this is not the first time I am standing against current opinion. Partition however took place, and from the very next day I felt it my duty to bring two parts of this truncated continent as close to each other as possible. I sincerely believe that destiny will bring us together and the peace and prosperity of these two peoples, who are in fact the same people, lie in constant cooperation. Such cooperation will be possible through a confederation or some other political organisation. But neither government is ready for it now, and the majority of the people in both countries are incapable of thinking in these terms.

So the time is not ripe yet and we have to create the preconditions for such developments. As I talk of the reunification of the two peoples I remember that the Hindu Mahasabha also has a similar aim. But do you think the means which they propagate will bring the subcontinent together?

I am a nationalist in the sense in which Mahatmaji or Gurudev was though I am not fit to touch their feet. I feel that enlightened national self-interest demands that we come to terms with Pakistan. Today all the world is talking of peace, and can't we talk of peace with our nearest neighbour? We cannot safeguard our national interests by following the wrong path. Why are we creating war hysteria instead of preparing our people for peace?

Last year an antinuclear armament conference was held here. At that time one of the foremost peace-leaders of the world was discussing the prospects of peace with our late Prime Minister. He said the world was spending billions of dollars for research on the means of war, but why was not a single penny being spent for research on

peace? Does any government give any thought to this immensely more vital need?

Neighbourly Relations

We are living in constant fear of China and Pakistan, and spending a vast amount of our resources in preparation for war. Should not we rather give more thought to the possibilities of fostering peace through international organisations? Because our relations with Pakistan are bitter the minorities in both countries feel terribly insecure, and whenever anything happens in Pakistan we take revenge in impotant rage on our fellow-countrymen and weaken our own nation. In no condition should the atmosphere in this country be charged with so much madness that a section of Indians should burn the houses or rape the women or strangle and throw into fire the babies of another section of Indians. If we want to live a healthy and civilised life we must get rid of such blind communal passion.

Some people tell me that however much I try I shall not be able to change the heart of Pakistan because Pakistan was born in hatred and because it is to Pakistan's interest to have constant friction with India. But I do not believe this reading of Pakistan's attitude to be correct. I have great faith in the new generation which is growing up in both countries. I am sure they will not be guided by medieval passions in this age of science and technology and revolutionary socio-economic ideas.

I am a humanist and I trust in human goodness. Can I accept that hatred and bitterness are the real feature of Hindu society? No, the truer picture of our society is obtainable in attempts like this for fostering peace and amity. If we want to give this effort a sound foundation we have to start with a programme of reeducation of our people in the ways of love and sympathy. I believe this to be possible. Let the scope of this work enlarge every day, and let us gradually realise our great Indian self in which there is tolerance and love for every human being.

Nationhood : Its Concept*

For the understanding and promotion of Indian unity or national integration it is first of all necessary to clarify the concept of Indian nationhood. In the long struggle for national freedom there emerged a clear enough concept of a single, composite, nonsectarian Indian nationhood. But the fact that there also emerged at the close of that struggle a rival concept based on Mohammed Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory—a separate Hindu nation and a separate Muslim nation resulting in the division of the country and the establishment of an Islamic state—clouded the freedom movement's concept. As was only to be expected, the two-nation theory was not slow, particularly after partition, in strengthening in this country the cry for a Hindu nation, which had in fact already been raised at the time of the freedom struggle.

Certain other factors which have contributed to this development need to be understood. First, though the Hindus are in an overwhelming majority in this country they still suffer from the psychology of a minority. This is because the Hindu community is divided owing to the caste system and untouchability, and the Hindus, though in majority, lived for centuries under the rule of non-Hindu minorities, chiefly Muslim and Christian, who originally came from outside India. Given the minority mentality, it is not difficult to see why the slogan "Hindu Rashtra" should be appealing and attractive to them.

Second, while it was easy in the freedom struggle to appreciate that success required the joint effort of all communities, thus promoting the concept of a single

*National Convention on Unity and Democracy: basic papers

composite nationhood, after independence there was no such compulsion left, particularly as increasing numbers of the majority community began to be persuaded that, being in an overwhelming majority, they could easily impose their will on the minority communities.

Concept of Hindu Rashtra

How dangerous this concept of nationhood could be in spite of its attractiveness to immature minds, not only for the unity of the Indian nation but also to the Hindu community itself because of its deep divisions, is little realised by the protagonists of "Hindu Rashtra". They also fail to realise that just as the goal of national freedom required the joint effort of all communities so does the present goal of national strength and national development.

As the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is the main protagonist of "Hindu Rashtra", the comment of its central executive on the Srinagar meeting of the National Integration Council may be of interest. It is reported to have said in a resolution that "a well-consolidated Hindu society which rose above all differences of caste, sect, party or language could alone form a firm base for real national integration."

There can be no objection to the consolidation of any community provided this does not lead to a separatist mentality, intercommunal alienation, communal politics and domination of one community, no matter how large, over another.

It is difficult to understand what the RSS executive means by a well-consolidated Hindu society rising above *party*. If it means that Hindus, by virtue of being Hindus, should all belong to a single party, this is a very dangerous thought which recalls to the mind the pre-partition slogan—*Gar tu Muslim hai, to Muslim League men aa*. If in this manner every community were to have its own exclusive party and politics national unity would become an impossibility.

It should be noted that there is also a strong movement among Muslims led by the Jamaat-e-Islami aiming at consolidating the Muslims not only as a separate religion but also as a social and political community. The next natural step can only be the assertion of a Muslim nation. Similar developments are bound to follow in every other sizeable community of "Hindu Rashtra," and not Bharatiya Rashtra, becomes the goal of the predominant Hindu community.

If the people of India with their many diversities are to become an emotionally united nation able to preserve and strengthen their political unity, they cannot but deliberately and understandingly choose the ideal of a composite, nonsectarian nationhood and work actively to that end. It is the task of this convention* to clear away all mental cobwebs and give a bold and unambiguous lead in this regard.

There is a view that "the achievements of our sages and and savants, *smritikars* and *purankars,* poets and artists, statesmen and warriors, comprise really the warp and woof of our national heritages and provide the real basis cf India's national oneness".** In this sense "India is an ancient nation" and it is fallacious to regard it "as yet a nation in the making".

The confusion here is between the cultural unity of a people and their political unity. Despite the fact that the people of India, from the Himachal to the Setu, have shared for centuries (with local variations) a common cultural heritage they very rarely belonged to a single political state. Nor is this a peculiarly Indian phenomenon. Elsewhere too such as in Europe or in the Arab world, cultural unity has coexisted for centuries with political disunity.

Our central concern at the present moment of our

*Jayaprakash Narayan had convened a convention of all political parties and eminent scholars in Delhi in 1969.

**Atal Behari Vajpayee, *The Statesman* June 15, 1968

history is to ensure that the political unity established by the constitution should be made firm and enduring. Events have shown that even those sections of the people who share India's ancient heritage have not hesitated when aggrieved, whether rightly or wrongly, to harbour, even proclaim, secessionist sentiments. It would therefore be wrong to think that the task of moulding a modern nation out of the diverse elements of Indian society has already been completed by the achievements of our savants and sages.

There is another view which considers the sense of belonging to India's historic past and of being with all those who share that past an essential qualification of a true Indian national. National integration, according to this view, mainly consists in inculcating this sense of belonging and identity. There is no doubt that those for instance who think that Indian history began with the first Muslim or Christian invasion and who feel no attachment to the India of earlier times lack the deeper emotional qualities an Indian national is expected to possess. It is interesting to notice that as modern nationalism develops in such ancient lands as Iran or Egypt, the Iranians and Egyptians, despite their history, are rediscovering themselves in their ancient glory.

Meaning of National Heritage

At this point it is also necessary to bear in mind that our national heritage includes not only what has come down to us from ancient times but also what came later. There has been in this country from times immemorial a commingling of foreign cultures and races with indigenous ones. In the case of the later arrivals such as Islam and Christianity, when political adversity drove Hindu society to defensive devices, the commingling was much slower.

Nevertheless Indian Christians and Muslims are very much Indian in their blood, appearance, ways of life, caste attitudes (whether for good or ill), language (even

Urdu is very much an Indian language), literature and other arts, thought and philosophy, material culture. Even their religions have come to acquire a quality of Indianness. In their turn they have also had a profound influence on Indian philosophy, science, literature, music, architecture, painting and the religious teachings of the medieval saints.

The point to emphasise here however is that our national heritage is a very complex affair and includes all we have inherited not only from the past millenia but also from the past centuries of our history. It is not only a question of Muslims and Christians and others with religions of foreign origin accepting India's ancient past as a part of their national heritage, but also of Hindus and others of indigenous religions accepting India's medieval and recent past as a part of their national heritage. There may be much in the two periods that each may reject, but by and large all Indians must accept the totality of Indian history as their own.

To avoid possible misunderstanding it should be added that feelings of identity with a country's past do not at all imply blind acceptance of or admiration for all that belonged to that past. It should also be stressed that the kind of emotional identification discussed above is a delicate process requiring patience, mutual respect and understanding and accommodation. Any attempt to hasten the process by force or intimidation can only produce further alienation and national disruption.

An all-inclusive Indian nation is fundamentally different from a Hindu nation. Protagonists of each will necessarily follow different roads to national unity. Protagonists of the first concept would look upon all citizens of India, irrespective of religion, language, etc as "sons of the soil" while protagonists of the other (such as Mr Golwalkar) would consider only Hindus sons of the soil and treat Muslims and Christians as "aggressors."

It would therefore be a very valuable contribution of the forthcoming convention on national unity and democracy to clarify this issue. Continued ambiguity regard-

ing it and the failure of the secular parties, who together form an overwhelming majority of political opinion in the country, to face this issue have left the field unchallenged to the protagonists of "Hindu Rashtra" and Muslim separatism, causing grave danger to the unity of India and the character of the Indian nation.

National Unity : Secularism*

Implicit in the foregoing discussion on the concept of nationhood was the issue of secularism. By its very definition "Hindu Rashtra", as conceived by its advocates, is antisecular because it considers Hindus alone sons of the soil, that is to say first-class citizens. On the other hand Bharatiya Rashtra is disruptive of national unity because any attempt to impose a second-class status on non-Hindus must lead to endless internal strife and ultimate disintegration.

Indeed, as pointed out in the previous section, it is doubtful whether in view of differences of caste and creed and the scourge of untouchability any attempt to build a Hindu nation on a communal and religious basis would not result in greater disruption of the Hindu community itself. To sum up, in view of the nature of Hindu society, as also of the multireligious and multicommunal nature of Indian society, secularism in national affairs is an inescapable requirement for national unity.

As the term secularism is given a variety of meanings it is perhaps necessary to indicate the sense in which it is used here in the context of national unity. Secularism has often been equated with antireligion, atheism and materialism. It is obvious that in these senses it has no relevance to the unity of the Indian people, who are deeply religious. In the context of unity secularism should have as broad a meaning as possible so as to be generally acceptable to the people.

In this broad sense secularism has to be considered in relation to the state and to social life generally. Happily the fathers of the Indian Constitution took care to base

*National Convention on Unity and Democracy: basic papers

the Indian state on secular principles even though the word secular does not appear at all in the constitution.

The brief note on "Secularism under the Indian Constitution"[1] describes the outlines of the constitution's secularism. It would appear from this that while the Indian state is not as rigorous as the American state, which in Thomas Jefferson's phrase raises "an impassable wall" between religion and state, it is more strictly secular than the English state, which upholds an established church to which among other things the sovereign must belong.

The Indian state has no official religion and maintains a benevolent neutrality towards all religions. But at the same time "it reserves to itself the right of legislating about all secular activity associated with religion" as also "the right to legislate for social welfare and reform ...even though such legislation may interfere with religious beliefs and practices."

State and Religion

The protagonists of "Hindu Rashtra" denounce the secularisation of the state. It is relevant therefore to point out that in Hindu political thought and practice state and religion were always kept apart. "The Hindu state, so far as we know, never attempted to impose a particular religion upon its people. Various creeds were permitted to practise and even propagate their faiths, build their places of worship and live in their own way. There are no traces in Indian history of the struggle for freedom of conscience which prevailed in Europe for many centuries".[2]

It is an undoubted fact that in India religious and philosophical thinkers were "able to enjoy perfect, nearly absolute, freedom for a long period. The freedom of thought in ancient India was so considerable as to find

1. M.C. Setalvad: Secularism—Patel Memorial Lectures
2. *Op cit*

no parallel in the West before the most recent age."[1] All authorities I believe are unanimous on this point. This incidentally shows up the claim of the "Hindu Rashtra" fanatics who aspire to establish Indian polity on the basis of Hindu culture.

The fact that in traditional Islam religion and state are inextricably linked makes it difficult for the Muslim community in India to adjust itself to a secular state. Indeed the traditionalists among them seem to be prepared to go so far as to want the Indian state to be transformed into a Hindu state under which they would advise their co-religionists to live as *mlechhas* or *shudras*. It is interesting to note how at the extremes the Hindu and Muslim communalists meet and reinforce one another. This perpetual division of the nation as preached by them into Hindus and Muslims, not only as religious but also as political communities, erects a permanent and impassable barrier to national integration.

Scientific and Technological Age

Fortunately the realities of the modern world and the requirements of the scientific and technological age have caused a considerable disengagement between religion and state in some advanced Muslim states, the effect of which will no doubt be felt upon the Muslims of India. But far more important is the question how far the Hindus will succeed in preserving the secular character of the state. Happily again the advocates of "Hindu Rashtra" are a small minority and are often apologetic about their ideas, which they try to smuggle into the heart of the Hindu community under false pretences such as anti-Muslim propaganda and onesided, often false, history.

As for the other religious communities, the issue of state and religion does not present much of a problem. For the Christian community the issue was settled long ago

1. *Ibid*

as a result of the prolonged struggle in Western Christendom between church and state, and the ultimate bifurcation of the two, differing only in degree in different Christian societies. In Sikhism, the Akal Takht, a religious institution, was no doubt a source also of supreme political authority, but except for the extreme communalists it is doubtful whether any appreciable section of Sikh opinion now advocates the subordination of the state to religion. By and large the Sikhs do uphold the secularisation of the state. This is equally, if not more, true of the other religious communities in the country.

As regards the application of secularism to social life generally the situation in the country is not as satisfactory as in respect of the state. This is due to the decline of true religion and the ascendancy of empty formalism, even of obscurantism. It is also due to the economy of scarcity in which jobs and other economic opportunities are scarce in relation to competitors. This competition finds it convenient to take religious-communal (as also caste-communal) forms, which largely explains why so many of the educated are fiercely communal both in the religious and caste sense.

Requisites of National Unity

It is not enough that the state should be secular for national unity but also that social life outside the proper field of religion should be secular. This has implications both for religious and nonreligious aspects of social life. Three main implications may be emphasised here: (a) the individual in society, while adhering to his religion and considering it the best, should respect other religions and practise tolerance and understanding towards them; (b) social life, in its nonreligious spheres, should be governed by rational, ethical and human attitudes rather than by creedal and communal considerations; and finally (c) religious practice itself should discriminate between the essentials of religion and its excrescences such

as human sacrifice (as in the recent case reported from Rajasthan), untouchability and belief in high and low castes, as still widely practised in Hindu society, and polygamy as said to be sanctioned by Islam and similar social and moral evils, superstitions, etc which are considered part of religion.

Indian society is by and large far from comprehending these implications today. Communal concepts of nationhood—Hindu, Muslim or other—deny and run counter to them. Therein lies a great danger to national unity and social amity. Unfortunately the present level of politics being what it is, politicians are not wanting who are prepared to exploit every superstition, every obscurantist belief and every religious and caste prejudice.

This arrests the process of enlightenment which modern science and the revival of ancient Indian spirituality—as epitomised in the Upanishadic age when the Indian mind knew no shackles and soared to the highest—have ushered in. Considered from this point of view, the process of Indian unity is a process of intellectual and spiritual enlightenment. May this convention give this process a clear and bold direction.

Case for Smaller States

Since the passing of the Nehru era and the emergence of non-Congress governments the states of India have grown rapidly in political importance. As a result they are demanding more and more powers for themselves. This trend is producing a fear in some quarters that the centre will gradually become weaker, and that the whole process may end up in the country's disintegration. It is proposed that the centre should be strengthened further by loading it with more powers.

It seems to me that the remedy might prove to be worse than the disease. Two results might follow: firstly, centre-state relations might further be strained, and secondly, the centre might become too flabby and overburdened to be able to function properly, which would mean in reality a weaker centre. The strength of the Union Government will not grow by adding to its list of powers and functions and substracting from that of the state governments but by giving to each powers and functions which should appropriately belong to them.

However, considering the vast population of the country and its many diversities, it is in the very nature of things that as time passes the states, particularly those with non-Congress administrations, will exert increasing pressure on the centre for more power for themselves. As the centre itself is constituted of the states' representatives it will not be able for political reasons to resist the pressure for long.

Process of Decentralisation[1]

Further, there is no reason why this process of decent-

1. The article is based on press statements published in the *Hindustan Times* (January 17, 1969) *National Herald* (January 1, 1969) and the *Hindustan Times* (April 7, 1969)

ralisation and devolution should halt at the state capitals. In fact it would be contrary to the spirit and aims of democracy. A farsighted and genuinely democratic centre should actively promote the extension of the process downward to the district level, so that instead of power being distributed among the present 16 states only it is spread over the 350 odd districts of the country. In fact, the institutional structure for this already exists in the zila parishads or district council; only they have to be made genuine self-governing institutions. In this manner two vital and major objectives could be achieved at once: indirect and automatic strengthening of the centre and the Union of India; and broadening the democratic structure to enable greater participation of the people in government.

Oversized States

An obvious corollary of this process is breaking up the oversized states such as UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and a few others. Except for the five Hindi-speaking states each major linguistic group has a state to itself. This creates the evil of what has come to be known as "linguism." Breaking up the large states apart from resulting in more compact, efficient and close-to-the-people administration, should also go far to mitigate linguistic jingoism.

The late Prime Minister expressed this opinion when I met him and suggested bifurcation of UP. Though Nehru wanted the state to be divided the late Govind Ballabh Pant totally opposed the idea.

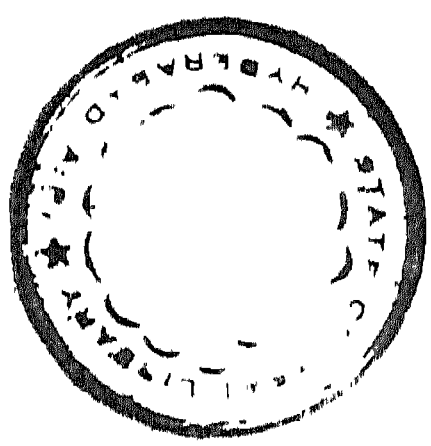
Small states would not weaken the centre as feared by some but would on the other hand strengthen it. It is wrong to think that if Bengal and Bihar or Gujarat and Maharashtra are merged the nation would become united, and if they are separate unity would be broken.

The bigger the states the weaker the centre. Smaller states would be nearer the people, and then only would the purpose behind the creation of states be achieved. My

thinking on this question has all along been that while the centre should be strong in respect of truly central subjects, and while I wish very much that the leadership at the centre should also be strong, at the same time states should be given a much freer hand in managing their affairs.

Centre State Relations

Centre-state relations would improve if the states were given more and more responsibilities and powers. This could be achieved in the framework of the existing constitution and the conventions developed in the last 22 years. If however amendment of the constitution becomes absolutely necessary there is no reason why it should not be done. A permanent finance commission for continuous review of the financial condition of the state governments should be constituted and it should have before it clear-cut principles for allocating funds to states from the Central divisible pool.



430 +9